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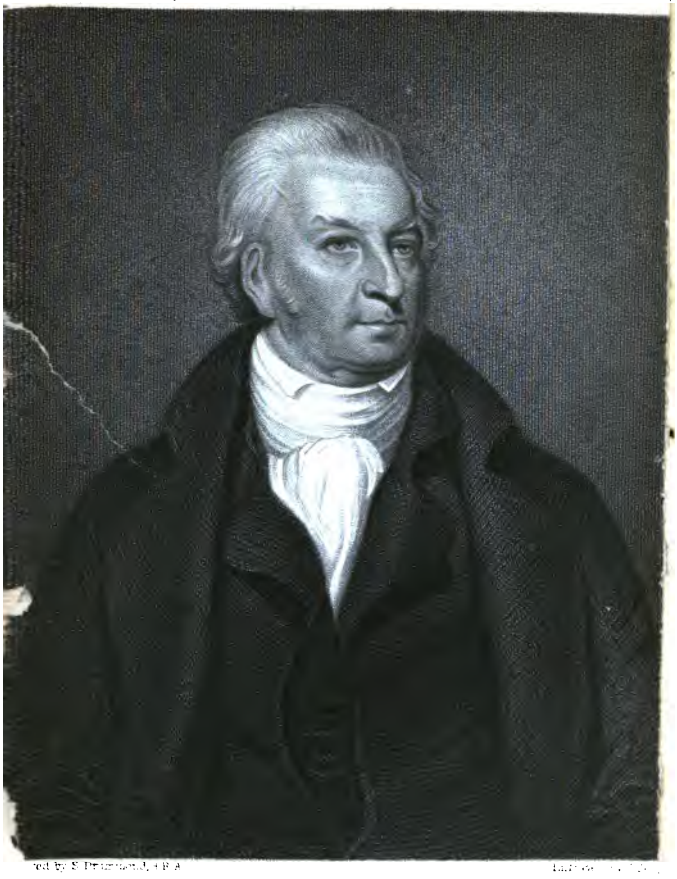


Revd. & dear Brother
Rend. Hill

MEMOIR

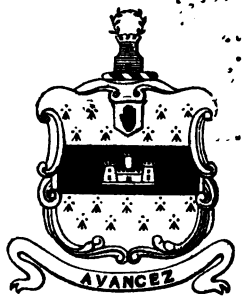
OF THE

REV. ROWLAND HILL, M.A.

BY WILLIAM JONES,
AUTHOR OF "TESTAMENTARY COUNSELS."

WITH A PREFACE,
BY THE REV. JAMES SHERMAN,
OF SURREY CHAPEL.

THIRD EDITION,
CAREFULLY REVISED.



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PREFACE.

THE records of a good man's life contain only a brief selection from the interesting facts connected with his earthly course. "In looking at a biographical volume of moderate size," remarks Mr. Foster, "which contains the principal incidents of a pious, diligent, and useful life, protracted too beyond the ordinary length, it is highly gratifying to reflect how much more is implied than related. Exclusively of childhood, and the earlier part of youth, (in which stage also there might be a worthy preparation for what was to follow,) it is the story of perhaps almost sixty years of unremitting exertion, applied, day by day, to the most valuable purposes. But, in such a course, what a prodigious number there have been of distinct acts, involving the voluntary exercise of the understanding, and the different moral and physical powers, directed to

objects prescribed by conscience, and performed and repeated with a resolute perseverance, from a regard to the Almighty. How many myriads of these distinct acts such a life will have included! What a multitude of them, to make up the intellectual and practical exertion of a month, or even of a week! And yet the biographical memoir can record all this only according to the scale of a paragraph of three or four sentences to the month,—hardly a single line to a day; though each one of many thousands of these days has contained, in strenuous, well-intended, and for the most part well-applied effort, in thought, speech, and practical occupation, a quantity of good agency, of which the expression, in written words, would be enough to fill the greater part of a moderate volume. So much more good has there been in a good man's life than the most prolix biographer could ever tell!"

The Author has felt the full force of these remarks, in preparing an account of the leading particulars of the Life, Ministry, Writings, and Character of Mr. Hill. He has been compelled to give but a brief statement of many important events connected with his history,

though he trusts that he has not omitted any thing necessary to exhibit to the public a faithful portrait of his venerable friend. His opinions are recorded upon all subjects likely to be interesting or useful to the reader, and, when practicable, in his own language. Should there be the appearance of severe satire and cutting sarcasm in any of the remarks contained in this Memoir, the reader must remember the times in which Mr. Hill was called to preach the Gospel, and the peculiar temperament of his mind. These considerations will explain, though they may not justify, any occasional departure from the beautiful rule, "speaking the truth in love."

The full force of Mr. Hill's observations cannot always be given in the written record. His manner, both in private and public, gave peculiar weight to his matter. It was his earnestness as a preacher, his full-toned and beautifully modulated voice, and the tear of compassion which floated in his eye, that fixed the conviction in his hearers, that he was sincerely anxious to promote their present and eternal happiness.

The Author's grateful acknowledgments are due to the ministers and friends who have

kindly furnished him with much valuable information, and with many original letters; particularly to Sir J. B. Williams, of Shrewsbury; the Rev. T. P. Bull, of Newport Pagnell; and the Rev. James Parsons, of York. The Rev. James Sherman has also laid the Author under great obligations, by his careful examination and kind recommendation of this Memoir.

Happy, indeed, will the Author be, if this humble memorial of a departed pastor should be the means of diffusing his catholic spirit in the church of Christ. At this eventful period, let the true disciples of our Divine Redeemer fervently pray, that the Lord would hasten the happy time when "the envy of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah be cut off; when Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim."

WILLIAM JONES.

PREFACE

BY

THE REV. JAMES SHERMAN.

THE life of the Rev. ROWLAND HILL must ever be deeply interesting to the churches of Christ in Britain, as it embraces a portion of their history in which the most momentous events connected with their present prosperity have transpired. The mental darkness and opposition to the gospel which pervaded all ranks of society when he commenced his ministerial career, required men of more than ordinary courage, influence, zeal, and holiness, to hold forth the torch of divine truth amidst the surrounding moral gloom. It pleased God at this period to raise up a band of eminent champions for Christ, who, careless of the world's esteem, ardently loving their Saviour, highly valuing immortal souls, and believing the gospel to be the only remedy for guilty men, went forth preaching every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.

The subject of this Memoir was one of these excellent men. The honourable family from which he descended—the noble sacrifices he made to publish Christ to his countrymen—the energy with which he prosecuted his labours—the friendship he displayed towards all sections of the church of Christ—his liberality to institutions for the education of the poor and the diffusion of divine truth—his arduous struggles for civil and religious liberty—his extensive usefulness in awaking multitudes from a death of sin to a life of righteousness—and his uniformly consistent character; must, to every reflecting mind, render him an object of veneration and love, as a minister eminently qualified by God for the times in which he appeared, and the important station in the church which he occupied.

Two Memoirs of Mr Hill have appeared. As they have been adverted to in this publication, it is unnecessary for me to notice them, except to express my regret, in common with many of Mr. Hill's friends, that they do not manifest more of that catholic spirit with which he was so eminently endowed.

This third Memoir, as far as I am capable of judging from fifteen years' acquaintance with its subject, contains a faithful and impartial portrait of his whole character; a description of his real sentiments, from his own published works; and an account of the history, discipline, and institutions of Surrey Chapel, not to be found in the works referred to. It is free from that narrow-minded spirit which would confine usefulness to immortal souls to one class of men, and to one way of accomplishing it.

I seize the present opportunity to express my fear that in some sections of the church of Christ, party spirit is evidently increasing, and that narrow-minded sentiments in the memoirs of liberally-minded men,

contribute much to maintain and perpetuate it. Surely the walls of separation are lofty enough, and the distance between Christians of different denominations already too great, without heightening the one and increasing the other. The Bible, which, happily, is now in almost every one's possession, shews such conduct to be inexcusable. If a man of God follow the mode of instruction which primitive ministers adopted, which Christ himself sanctioned, and which the Holy Ghost commended, why should it be considered necessary to apologize for him—to guard the public mind from the contagion of his example,—and to lessen, as much as possible, the influence of his labours?

In the Memoir of that eminently devoted man, the Rev. Mr. Walker, of Truro, it is more than intimated that the revival of religion in this country, which followed the labours of Whitefield, Wesley, Hill, and others, has been erroneously attributed to them, instead of to those servants of Christ who confined their labours to a limited circle, and to regular and canonical services. Let nothing be detracted from the part which such excellent men took in the revival of religion; let them receive from the whole church the due acknowledgment of all the successes attending their regular labours, which all who love Christ must appreciate and commend; but let not party feeling dictate a sentiment which is as contrary to universal testimony as it is to the ordinary operations of Divine Providence. If these holy men, after considering the claims of immortal souls, the duties of their stations, and their accountability to their Master, could not see it right to expose themselves to ecclesiastical censure, by preaching beyond prescribed limits, let due credit be given them for acting up to their conscientious convictions of duty, and their persuasion that they could serve Christ better, and accomplish more good, by

moving in a regular, rather than in an eccentric, orbit; but let no uncandid attempts be made to tarnish the lustre of the names, or lessen the effects of the labours, of those who were at least equally holy and devoted men; and who, after a diligent investigation of their Saviour's commands, a study of the conduct of his apostles, and filled with yearnings of compassion for the miseries of their fellow-immortals, felt it to be their imperative duty to go out into the highways, and into the streets and lanes of the city, to compel men to come in, that God's house might be filled. These holy men shewed their sincerity by sacrificing the esteem of the great and learned, the love and respect of their kindred, and the hopes of worldly advancement, and by subjecting themselves to obloquy, scorn, and personal danger, to save souls from ruin. Statesmen, and philanthropists, and historians, and ministers, have planted on their graves evergreens and sweet-blooming flowers, full of fragrance and beauty; and if any sacrilegious hand, in the darkness of bigotry, attempt to uproot them, the whole Christian Church, with the sword of truth, will keep guard around their graves, and preserve them from the spoiler.

The Life of the Rev. Henry Venn is one of the most interesting which modern times have furnished. His apostolic zeal—his lively piety—his devotedness to his office—and his general aim at the glory of Christ, shine conspicuously throughout his career. No prayerful minister or Christian can read it without great spiritual advantage. But he is represented to have had one blot on his character—"he preached in neighbouring parishes, at the houses, and, in some few instances, in the barns, of the farmers; and in his visits to London he officiated at the chapel of the Rev. Rowland Hill." Let the following extract speak for itself:—

"Were I to deliver a panegyric agreeable to my own views of that excellent man, in whom I every day saw something new to admire and honour, I should draw a veil over what I am going to relate. But the faithfulness of an historian compels me to do violence to the feelings of a son. His mind was naturally ardent; and he was of a temper to be carried out by zeal, rather than to listen to the cold calculations of prudence. Influenced by the hope of doing good, my father, in certain instances, preached in unconsecrated places." *

Does not this stricture condemn those devoted clergymen who, contrary to ecclesiastical discipline, lecture in their school-rooms and in cottages in their parish—for these are "unconsecrated places?" and those self-denying clergymen in Ireland, who, uniting in the efforts made by the Irish Church Home Mission, preach in the consecrated edifice, if they can obtain it, or, if not, in any chapel or convenient place that presents itself? If it really was criminal for Mr. Venn to preach at Surrey chapel, where he addressed nearly three thousand attentive hearers at one time, and where God gave him so many seals to his ministry, it is equally sinful in the cases above mentioned. But who would incur the responsibility of attempting to stop such men in their labours of love to the souls of men? Who would not willingly pray that every house might be a Bethel, and every building be consecrated for the publication of the Redeemer's salvation? For my own part, I should hail the day which would afford my beloved brethren in the Establishment, full liberty to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ at Surrey Chapel, without offending any ecclesiastical law, even although I might still be shut out of their pulpits.

* Life of Rev. Henry Venn, M. A., page 176.

In recommending this Memoir of the venerable Rowland Hill to the Christian public, I add my earnest wishes that it may tend greatly to augment the spirit of universal love among all Christians, and that our Saviour's prayer will be ere long accomplished, "That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee: that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me." John xvii. 21.

JAMES SHERMAN.

Surrey Chapel, Feb. 1st, 1837.

MEMOIR,

&c.

CHAP. I.

INTRODUCTION.

THE REAL VALUE OF BIOGRAPHY—THE LIVES OF MR. HILL BY PREVIOUS BIOGRAPHERS NOTICED—LORD BACON'S OPINION OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE—THE STATE OF THE CHURCH IN ROMAINE'S DAYS—OPINIONS RESPECTING WESLEY, WHITEFIELD, AND THEIR FOLLOWERS—MR. WALKER, OF TRURO—THE REVIVALISTS OF RELIGION—THE BISHOP OF CHESTER'S CHARGE IN 1835—WICKLIFF AND LUTHER—MR. HILL'S USEFULNESS PROMOTED BY THE COURSE HE PURSUED—EXTRACT FROM THE LIFE OF FELIX NEFF—REMARKS ON VIOLATIONS OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE—EXTRACT FROM THE BISHOP OF LONDON'S CHARGE IN REFERENCE TO THE EFFECTS OF IRREGULAR PREACHING—FELIX NEFF'S DESCRIPTION OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

THE memoirs of our departed friends are valuable only as they contain a faithful record of their excellences and defects, and a full developement of their opinions upon important points. An intimate acquaintance with a be-

loved friend may so enthrone him in our affections, that there may be considerable danger of his excellences being too highly estimated, or of the blemishes of his character being unintentionally overlooked. A partial, or prejudiced statement, also, renders a memoir of little value to the reader who consults it either for information or for personal improvement.

There are also peculiar difficulties in justly estimating some characters. "The pictures of our absent friends," it has been remarked, "though they express no more than their outward and visible features, are very desirable and delightful monuments; but the characters of their minds, and their inward and invisible beauties, are far more excellent and valuable. Fine spirits, like elegant faces, are difficult to be drawn to an exactness, even by the greatest masters."*

The Rev. Rowland Hill having had two biographers to hand down to future ages the particulars of his useful life, it may well be inquired, why a third should make his appearance. The writer ventures not to suppose

* Dr. Skippen's Funeral Sermon for Richard Legh, esq. 1687.

that he is more capable than others, of presenting to the public the memorials of his departed friend, yet there may be substantial reasons why the additional information he possesses should be furnished to the public. The memoir of the life, ministry, and writings of the Rev. Rowland Hill, by Mr. Jones, a Scotch Baptist, does not contain, by any means, a just representation of Mr. Hill's life and character. Had Mr. Jones personally known the departed minister, he would surely have omitted many of the unkind and unjustifiable reflections which his book contains. He was a stranger to Mr. Hill's private character, and very little acquainted with him as a public man, and therefore could not be qualified for the duty he sought to discharge. It is evident that, in the view of Mr. Jones, the great defect in Mr. Hill's character consisted in his being an Episcopalian, and not a Scotch Baptist; this was "the head and front of his offending." And although it may be the privilege of this biographer to see his own opinions of church government clearly revealed in the New Testament, yet he should remember that others, whose names have been held in long and deserved reputation, hold sentiments widely different from his own. In addition to the

authorities referred to in several parts of the ensuing pages, the remarks of Lord Bacon may be given: "I, for my part, do confess, that in revolving the Scriptures, I could never find any such thing; (one form of discipline for all churches,) but that God had left the like liberty to the church government as he had done to the civil government; to be varied according to time, and place, and accidents, which nevertheless his high and divine providence doth order and dispose."

These were precisely the views of Mr. Hill. He acknowledged and mourned over the defects which he discovered in the Establishment of our country, but still felt it his duty not entirely to leave her communion. But this, says Mr. Jones, was "glaring inconsistency, and can only be resolved into his total unacquaintedness with the nature, constitution, laws, and discipline of the churches of Christ, as laid down in the New Testament."* And Mr. Hill's attachment to the church was the cause, according to the wonderful discovery of Mr. Jones, why he was the subject of fear and trembling in "the valley of the shadow of death," and was forsaken by the Lord, "when heart and flesh were failing."

* Jones's Life, p. 38.

"We see him," remarks Mr. Jones, "all his lifetime trammelled with antichristian abominations, —not following the Lord fully, so as to take part with Christ's despised disciples, but halting between two opinions, on matters of vital interest to Christianity,—labouring to uphold a system, against which the vials of the wrath of Heaven are pouring out. In the very nature of things, this must darken his evidences of personal interest in the Saviour!!"*

Leaving, however, the biographical sketch by Mr. Jones, it will be necessary to shew that "the Life of the Rev. Rowland Hill," by Mr. Sidney, does not render another account of the excellent minister altogether unnecessary. He has, doubtless, exercised considerable discretion in the selection of the valuable materials presented to the public, but he has remained silent on some points as to which additional information is required. Such silence has probably been produced by a desire not unnecessarily to expose the wanderings of his beloved friend from the straight line of ecclesiastical discipline, and by his own private and conscientious views upon that particular subject.

That a clerical biographer should feel it his

* Jones's Life, p. 314.

duty strongly to remonstrate against all infringement of church rules, is perfectly in character. The writer does not feel himself called upon either to justify or condemn those irregularities of which Mr. Sidney complains; but he deems it a duty to state those special and extraordinary circumstances, which induced Mr. Hill to pursue that course of usefulness which he deemed most for the glory of God, and the good of his cause.

If it can be shewn that there were sufficient means within the Church fully to diffuse the Gospel among our perishing countrymen, and that, to accomplish this important object, there was no necessity to go beyond its prescribed boundaries,—then it must be admitted that a clergyman was not justified in his violation of its discipline: but what was the actual state of the Establishment? When Romaine commenced a special meeting, to "pray for the peace of the Church, and for all orders and degrees of its ministers," he was accustomed to mention the names of all the pious clergy he knew, in his weekly supplications: at that time the names he was able to include in his prayer did not exceed eight in the whole kingdom."* The question,

* Life of Romaine, p. 32.

then, may be solemnly put, Did not such times justify Wesley, Whitefield, and Hill in departing from the strict rules of the Church to which they were affectionately attached?

Now, the opinions we entertain upon this point will materially influence our minds, not only in the matter we furnish to the public in detailing the history of an irregular clergyman, but in the conclusions we draw from the statements we make. Our opinions may be most conscientiously given, and yet they may, in the view of persons equally conscientious, be considered partial and inaccurate. Without attempting to justify all the proceedings of the holy men who were the instruments of reviving religion in this country in the reign of George the Second and his successor, yet the writer admits that he peruses their histories with great admiration and delight. He would apply to them the words of Milton, when referring to the Reformation:—"When I recall to mind at last, after so many dark ages, wherein the huge overshadowing train of error had almost swept all the stars out of the firmament of the church, how the bright and blessed Reformation (by Divine power) struck through the black and settled night of ignorance, methinks a sovereign

and reviving joy must needs rush into the bosom of him that reads or hears, and the sweet odour of the returning gospel imbathe his soul with the fragrancy of heaven."* With these feelings, he is persuaded the departed pastor of Surrey Chapel fully sympathized, while he rejoiced in his personal knowledge of several of those great men who "went forth *without* the camp," bearing the reproach of Christ.†

But what are the opinions of Mr. Sidney? He candidly admits that, when Mr. Hill first became a preacher, many slept upon their weapons, or woke only to thwart those who were willing to fight the battles of the Lord; and

* Milton's Prose Works, with Introduction, by Fletcher, p. 2. "On the Reformation in England."

† Although Middelton, in his Ecclesiastical Memoirs, considers "that the influence of these efforts on the Establishment was not unmixed with serious evils," he adds, "that spirit must be justly charged with bitterness, which can roundly condemn the innovating zeal of the earlier Methodists, when reference is made to the formal, inefficient, infidel profession of the day; and an involuntary admiration is excited at the expeditions of such men as the two Wesleys, Delamotte, Ingham, and Whitefield, prompted by a regard to the souls of their fellow-creatures." Middelton's Ecclesiastical Memoir, ch. iii.

in such a case, that zealous men should require a little more liberty to go forth in detachments, was excusable amidst the difficulties of the times;* but he states that, "without denying that whenever the necessity of conversion by the Spirit of Christ was urged upon the people, both religious advantage and improved morals were the happy results, I think it will appear, upon looking at the present consequences of these important exertions, that the greatest ultimate benefit has flowed from such as adhered to the rules of our church."†

When speaking of the excellent Mr. Walker, of Truro, who died in 1761, Mr. Sidney remarks, "He lived in an age of great interest, when the long-forgotten doctrines of the Reformation began to be received amongst a people who had sunk into miserable depths of apathy and irreligion. A flame had just been enkindled by the fire and zeal of certain energetic individuals, who possessed much more of the fervour than the wisdom of Christianity, and whose eyes were so dazzled by a sudden burst of light, that they lost the power of looking calmly either on present circumstances or

* Sidney's Life, page 401. † Ibid. 426.

future consequences.* Their efforts were made with a laudable desire to rouse from the sleep of death, those who slumbered in their sins; but they were so elated by success, that they forgot, while spreading gospel doctrines, to lay permanent foundations for a spirit of Christian unity. The confusion and disunion which succeeded the death of one of such leaders, were generally as injurious as his labours had been useful. Whitefield and others, who pursued a like course, undoubtedly waged a mighty warfare against the spiritual enemies of man; but, in the heat of battle, struck too much at a venture, and inflicted wounds upon their own church, which have not yet been healed. Instead of bringing into vigorous action the practical wisdom of our reformers, they adopted sudden plans of their own, which were often ill-suited to the then agitated elements around

* "It may be laid down as a principle established by fact, that whenever a zealous and faithful ministry is raised up, after a long spiritual death, the early efforts of that ministry are not only powerful, but often attended with extraordinary circumstances: nor are such extraordinary circumstances necessarily extravagancies because they are not common."—Watson's Life of Wesley, p. 95.

them, and productive of serious injury when they had settled into a calm. They made too much haste for the gradual working of gospel leaven; but, to do them justice, their motives were pure, and their lives devoted to the willing service of God. It must also be remembered, that they had no opportunity of seeing, as we do, the full extent of those dangers which accompany departure from established discipline and order. The Dissenters of that age were generally well-disposed to enjoy their own opinions in peace, and set an edifying example of learning and piety. Watts, Doddridge, Guise, and others, preached also the true doctrines of the Reformation, which had unhappily been overlooked by too many Churchmen, who neither felt in their hearts, nor taught in their pulpits, what they had subscribed with their hands. Hence these good men naturally attracted attention and friendship from enlightened clergymen, who suspected no evil, nor had indeed cause to fear it from such liberal nonconformists. That, however, which was not to be dreaded from individuals, ought to have been apprehended from principles, to the spread of which an unguarded conduct in many members of our establishment gave but too much

facility. Mr. Walker, and his contemporaries of a kindred spirit, foresaw and escaped these dangers, while they have transmitted to posterity proofs of devotedness to their calling, and of experimental godliness, fully equal to those of men more popular, but less prudent. They beheld, with amazement and grief, those deviations from all rule, by which thousands were misguided;* though they were, notwithstanding, most unjustly reproached as enthusiasts."†

* "When churchmen consider the evils done by the Methodists and others, they look at the mere fact, that a great body of people have been raised up, as they say, out of the church, within a century past, excelling in number, almost, if not entirely, the whole of the old bodies of Dissenters; and they assume that if the Wesleys and Mr. Whitefield had never appeared, the church would have been in as improved a state as now, with none but the old Dissenters to contend with. There is a great fallacy in both these views. The persons who were led to God by the ministry of these excellent men and their successors, were for the most part persons who never were, in any substantial sense, and never would have been, of the church."—Watson's Life of Wesley, pp. 365, 371.

† "The late Mr. Walker, of Truro, and a few others, not only loved and preached the gospel, but

"One of the last advices Mr. Walker is reported to have given to a favourite member of his clerical club, was, 'Whatever good you design to do, do it in the church;' to the expression of which opinion he was doubtless led, by his foresight of that disorder in which all irregularity must ever end. Time has now amply revealed the wisdom of his judgment, and it only remains for us to hope, that experience will teach others, hereafter, the truth of what his penetration and knowledge of human nature predicted of the hasty proceedings of his own days. We have been accustomed to attribute too much of the present energy in our church to men, who, having called upon her sons to awake, either left them alone, or led them astray when aroused from their lethargy; a conclusion evidently most erroneous, since the most effective clergymen of our times are imitators of those who lamented and opposed all irregularity."*

were well disposed towards Mr. Wesley, and those under his care. Some of these gentlemen assisted at the first conferences, but, after a few years, they seemed unwilling to share in his reproach."—Moore's Life of Wesley, vol. ii. p. 196.

* Life of Walker, pp. 279—282.

On the same subject, Mr. Sidney remarks,—"The indiscreet manner in which some clergymen of eminent zeal, unquestionable piety, and certainly of extensive, but not of unmixed usefulness, overlooked the value of the forms, and despised the discipline of our establishment, during the days of the revival of religion in this country, produced evils only to be remedied by the line pursued at the present time, by men not less devout in heart, but more judicious in practice. If any thing can restore the primitive affection for our establishment, it will be the consistent and enlightened churchmanship of those who now form its brightest ornaments, but who desire not to move out of their own orbit, though they are anxious to shed their light as far beyond it as possible."*

No one can doubt that Mr. Sidney has stated his sincere convictions in the remarks which have been given. But may it not be asked, was it not absolutely impracticable to rouse the slumbering members of the universal church, without some violation of strict discipline, and more especially at a time when the laws connected with ecclesiastical order were expounded

* Sidney's Life of Walker of Truro, p. 119.

by men strongly opposed "to the truth as it is in Jesus?"—at a time when six devoted students were expelled from St. Edmund's Hall for praying and reading the Scriptures, which led the learned defender of these persecuted men to make the sarcastic remark, that if *they* were expelled for having too much religion, "it would be well to inquire into the conduct of some who had too little:"—"a fair reflexion," remarks an impartial writer, "on the relaxed state of academic discipline, as it regarded the personal morality of the members; for it was notorious that Mr. Welling had been charged on oath with contemning the Scriptures, and ridiculing the miracles, but was excused on the plea of intoxication."*

If it be admitted that the measures which were adopted in Whitefield's times are unnecessary in the present day, then his example, and that of his coadjutors in the work, cannot be prejudicial to ministers who are not called to proclaim the gospel under the same circumstances of spiritual lethargy, in which that

* Middelton's Ecclesiastical Memoir, p. 148. See also chap. ii

eminent preacher and his followers found all denominations of the religious world.

But did not the state of the times in which Mr. Hill exercised his ministry, fully justify his course? On this point let the devoted Bishop of Chester be heard. In his charge to the clergy of his diocese, at his triennial visitation in 1835, he feels the painful necessity of admitting that "in the age which is gone by, the church has not kept sufficiently in view the charge which she had undertaken, the religious culture of our people, in all their divisions and subdivisions. She confined herself too much to certain times and limits; entrenched herself behind established usage and legal arrangement, whilst unprovided flocks were 'wandering in the mountains,' and crowds were remaining 'idle in the market-places,' because 'no man hired them.' She has been slow to adapt herself to the altered circumstances of the country; has remained fixed and stationary, whilst all around her has been progressive and expansive."

"It was sufficiently shewn," remarks this excellent prelate, "by the success which attended the irregular exertions of Wesley and

his followers, what the people needed, and what would engage their affections. But no disposition appeared to profit by the example, and to supply to neglected hamlets, or hearers excluded from the church through their regular pastures, the food which they were seeking elsewhere and from other hands. It was forgotten, that when a parish extended over many miles, a considerable portion of its inhabitants must necessarily be precluded from any regular attendance on the worship of the parish church. It was forgotten, that the soul is not naturally disposed to 'seek the things that are above,' and requires to be continually watched, and roused, and led onward. There were indeed always some, but they were comparatively few in number, who looked upon the example of the apostle as applicable to themselves, who 'taught both publicly, and from house to house, testifying repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ;' who seemed to remember that they had engaged to set one object before them as the business of their lives, how they 'might warn every man, and teach every man in all wisdom, that they might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.'"

Under the circumstances thus clearly stated

the revivalists of religion had but one choice, either to break through the strict discipline of the church, or to let sinners perish in their sins. Their conduct shews that they valued souls more than all earthly considerations, and we trust that such men will be found in every age of the church, men who, like the martyrs, 'with the irresistible *might of weakness*, shall shake all the powers of darkness.'* Wickliff in this country, and Luther in Germany, would have been comparatively useless characters, had their hands remained tied with the withes of human regulations. The Lord, who by his providence speaks to special agents, said, "Loose them, and let them go."

There can be no doubt that a wise and gracious Providence permitted Mr. Hill to pursue an "irregular" course. He was not to be confined within the limits of any particular church, that he might, among other things, "bring back many of those who had wandered from the fold, only because its dimensions were not sufficient to contain the multitude."† How could these wandering sheep be reclaimed, unless the shepherd *left* the fold in pursuit of them?

* Milton.

† Life of Walker, p. 281.

Yet Mr. Sidney remarks, "Had Mr. Hill confined himself, for these last thirty years, to the community of which, by ordination, he was a member, his talents as a preacher, his exalted character, and distinguished family connexions, would have opened to him a wide and most influential field of action, and he would have been spared numerous trials and embarrassments, in which he was involved from want of a well-defined rule of action."* On this point, it will be seen from the following memoir, that Mr. Hill's opinions were decidedly opposed to those of his biographer.† He felt that he had pursued a right course, though one of tribulation, and he could not look back. His Master had placed him in the situation he occupied, and he would not forsake it. His usefulness, in calling many souls to God, justified the plans he had adopted, and the fact that, *as a churchman*, he was freely admitted into every respectable evangelical dissenting pulpit in the united kingdom, must have "opened to him a wider and more influential field of action," than he could have found within the limits of the largest parochial district in the country. It may be

* Sidney's Life of Hill, p. 413.

† See last chapter of this Memoir.

said of Mr. Hill, as of Felix Neff, the pastor of the Alps, that he was precisely the man for the work he had to do. "Herein appears that admirable economy of the Lord, which prepares a labourer for a certain portion of the gospel field, and establishes a sort of relation between the gifts of the workman, and the requirements of the work which He allots to him; between the character of the work to be done, and that of him who is to do it. This admirable economy of our Divine Master is very perceptible in the history of his church. The Lord has always raised up, prepared, and placed a workman, a special servant, wherever he has had a special work to be done, or a particular station to be filled. Thus it was, that at Athens, in encountering the Epicureans and the Stoics, and before the Areopagites, Paul was more necessary than Peter. Calvin would have failed in Germany, and Luther in Geneva. Chalmers would not have suited the High Alps, nor Felix Neff, Edinburgh.

"When a man is truly called of God to his work, he will find, in some part of the world, a situation which has been expressly made for him only. Happy the servant of God who is in his place; who feels it, and remains there, and

who has no desire to leave it. A star escaped from its orbit, and condemned, like Cain, to wander without finding a place of rest, would be but a faint image of any unhappy intelligence, who should not have kept the place which the Lord had assigned him. 'As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place,' Proverbs xxvii. 8. A man is blessed in the service of the Lord, not when he occupies an eminent post, where his ministry attracts public attention, or when he displays the splendour of some fine talent; but rather, I repeat, when he has found his place, whatever it be, whether unknown to the world, or well known, humble or eminent; when he loves it, and abides in it; and, above all, when he is faithful in it. Such was the happiness of Neff: he found his place, he kept it, he was faithful in it."*

And such, also, was the happiness of Rowland Hill. He found his place, he kept it, he was faithful in it; and the Lord manifested his approbation, by adding to the church a great multitude through his instrumentality. A dif-

* Memoir of Felix Neff, published by the Religious Tract Society.

be asked, Did the ministers of the Establishment adopt any sufficient measures to prevent the secession of the people? If not, on whom should rest the guilt of their loss? "Had the clergy been disposed to co-operate in this evident revival and spread of true religion; and had the heads of the church been willing to sanction itinerant labours among its ministers, and private religious meetings among the serious part of the people for mutual edification, the great body of Methodists might have been retained in communion with the Church of England."*

On the other hand, if it can be shown, that when Wesley, Whitefield, and their successors appeared, there was not an efficient moral agency in the establishment, commensurate to the wants of the people, then may all episcopalians say, with the present Bishop of London, "It was necessary that Christ should be preached; and if we did not possess the means of doing so within ourselves, we have reason to rejoice that it was faithfully, though irregularly, done by others."†

* Watson's Life of Wesley, p. 104.

† See last chapter of this Memoir.

With these views of the times of Rowland Hill, and of his special adaptation to the station he was called to occupy, the following Memoir has been compiled. The writer having watched his movements for nearly a quarter of a century, hopes he has gathered up some fragments which have been left by the biographers who have preceded him, that nothing may be lost which has a tendency to place the venerable saint fully before the Christian reader. Like his departed friend, he has no exclusive attachments, though he has his predilections. He hopes he can love the Saviour's likeness wherever it is to be found. Like him, also, he cannot consider Christ's church to be confined within the boundary line of any one denomination. The spiritual people of the Lord are his church in this world, and they will be for ever with him in the realms above. "There," in the beautiful language of Neff, "a thousand times better than in ancient Zion, is God served, praised, and glorified; that celestial and spiritual temple is formed of the whole number of those holy beings who find in God their chief happiness. The glory of Jehovah fills and enlightens it, and is reflected from every one of the living stones of which it is composed. His

love unites them all. The King of glory dwells in the midst of them. He rejoices in their bliss, and listens with pleasure to the everlasting concert of their gratitude. Such is the temple in which God dwells; the only temple that is worthy of him. What then are we to say of the different churches in which the Gospel is preached upon the earth? How many dissensions among the labourers! how many conjectures and disputes about the final purpose of the Great Architect, and the several parts of his plan, which are known only to himself! Shall we search in this chaos for the true church, the spiritual temple? Would we wish to construct it of all this mass of rudely formed blocks, and rough-hewn stones; or only of those that shall appear to us to be already prepared by the Great Master? Shall we endeavour to arrange in one exact and uniform order, all those stones that we find in the various quarries opened in a thousand places in the world; or, finding that we cannot accomplish this, shall we try, at least, to collect them into different heaps, as men do those stones that are set aside to be measured before they are applied to the work? Oh, how much wiser is the Master! while some are disputing about the excellence of

this or the other department of the work, and while others are spending their strength in endeavouring to introduce perfect order, the wise Master-builder surveys in silence the vast scene of operations, chooses and marks the materials which he sees to be prepared amidst all this confusion, and causes them to be removed, and placed in his heavenly edifice; assigning to every piece the place most proper for it, and for which he has designed it. Such, my beloved brethren, is the sublime idea which we ought to form of this celestial tabernacle, this spiritual house of God, this universal church, both militant and triumphant; the existence of which we confess in the Apostles' creed. Oh! how contemptible now will appear, in our eyes, all the proud claims to universality of this or that particular church, as also those endless disputes about succession, priestly dominion, and discipline, which have at all times divided believers, and continue to do so to the present day. Let us rather labour in the quarry, where our work is assigned, to prepare as great a quantity of materials as possible; and especially let us entreat the Lord to make us all lively stones fit for his building. Amen."

CHAP. II.

FROM HIS BIRTH TO HIS APPOINTMENT TO THE CURACY OF KINGSTON.

THE ANCESTORS OF MR. HILL—THE BIRTH OF ROWLAND—HIS EARLY RELIGIOUS IMPRESSIONS—HE IS SENT TO ETON—SIR RICHARD HILL'S LETTER—ANECDOTE—THE GRATEFUL NEGRO—HYMN COMPOSED BY MR. HILL, ON HIS CONVERSION—HIS USEFULNESS AT ETON—REMOVAL TO CAMBRIDGE—THE STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY AT THAT TIME—MISS JANE HILL'S REMARKS—FIRST ACQUAINTANCE WITH ROBINSON OF LEICESTER, BERRIDGE, AND WHITEFIELD—MR. HILL'S FIRST EFFORTS AS A PREACHER—THE CONVICT—ANECDOTES OF WHITEFIELD—COLLIERS AT KINGSWOOD—THE OPPOSITION OF MR. HILL'S PARENTS TO HIS IRREGULAR COURSE—CAPTAIN SCOTT—CHARACTERISTIC LETTER FROM MR. BERRIDGE—PARTICULARS OF THE EXPULSION OF OXFORD STUDENTS—REV. MR. SIMEON—ANECDOTE OF JOHNNY STETTLE—REMARK OF CORNELIUS WINTER—MR. HILL TAKES HIS DEGREE—THE DIFFICULTIES HE HAD IN OBTAINING ORDINATION—LETTER TO MR. PENTYCROSS—MR. HILL'S ORDINATION—HIS CURACY AT KINGSTON.

THE REV. ROWLAND HILL was descended from an ancient and honourable family. The earliest record of his ancestors is found in the reign of Edward the First, when they appear to have

been well known in the northern counties. Hugh de la Hulle, of Hull, removed from thence into Shropshire, and from him descended Sir Rowland Hill, the first Protestant Lord Mayor of London. Sir Rowland was twice called by his fellow-citizens to fill that important office, once in the reign of Henry the VIIIth, and again when Edward the VIth was on the throne. From the former monarch this worthy citizen received the honour of knighthood. He died without issue, bequeathing his estates to the children of his sisters. He devoted part of his wealth to the establishment of several important charities, which continue unto this day.

The founder of the present family was Richard Hill, born on March 23rd, 1654, who received his education at the celebrated grammar-school of Shrewsbury, and afterwards graduated at St. John's College, Cambridge, where he obtained a fellowship. He was tutor to Lord Hyde, the son of the Earl of Rochester, and being, through him, introduced into political life, he became, in 1691, paymaster of the forces in Flanders, an office which he discharged with distinguished ability and integrity. We find him afterwards engaged in several

special missions to foreign courts, and though placed in peculiarly difficult circumstances, effecting treaties which were highly beneficial to his country. He was chosen a lord of the treasury, one of the advisers of Prince George of Denmark as lord high admiral, and also a member of his majesty's most honourable privy council.

This wealthy and upright statesman declined the honour of baronetcy, which was, however, subsequently bestowed on his nephew, Rowland Hill, the son of his brother John.

Sir Rowland Hill was member of parliament for Lichfield, during several sessions. He married the daughter of Sir Brian Broughton, baronet,—by whom he had six sons,—namely, the late Sir Richard Hill, M.P., the late Sir John Hill, father of the present commander-in-chief of his majesty's forces, the Rev. Rowland Hill, A.M., the subject of this biographical sketch, also Thomas, Robert, and Brian, the first two of whom died many years since, and the latter resided at Weston, very near the family mansion at Hawkstone. Sir Rowland had also two daughters, Jane and Mary. The name of Miss Jane Hill will appear in these Memoirs. She was the pious and inte-

resting correspondent of Lady Glenorchy, in whose Memoir many of her excellent letters have been published. The second daughter, Mary, married Clement Tudway, esq. who was member of parliament for Wells, in Somersetshire.

Sir Richard Hill and his brother Brian appear to have possessed the catholic spirit of Rowland. Mr. Brian Hill was a man of retired habits, and therefore little was heard of him during his long life. He was content to spend his days in the village of Weston, being prevented, by scruples of conscience, from accepting any preferment in the church. His attachment to the doctrines recognized in the articles and liturgical service, was ardently sincere. While at Weston, Mr. Brian Hill published a poem called "Henry and Acasto;" and also a volume of "Travels through Sicily and Calabria." Having frequent occasion to retire to Bath for change of air, he heard, during his residence in that city, the Rev. William Jay, from whose ministry he derived much edification.

The Rev. Rowland Hill was born at Hawkstone on the 23rd of August, 1744. His disposition was lively, and he was fond, in his early days, of those sallies of wit and playfulness

felt. He affectionately admonished Rowland "not to be led away by the bad example of his schoolfellows."

In 1761, Mr. Hill, then about seventeen years of age, was sent to Eton, whither he was followed by the advice and prayers of his beloved relatives. Here he was exposed to those peculiar temptations which have proved fatal to many promising young men. At this time he was occasionally the subject of deep distress, from the recollection of the words, "The end of these things is death."

The following letter will shew the deep interest Sir Richard continued to feel in the spiritual prosperity of his brother:—

"London, Feb. 22, 1762.

"My very dear Brother,

"Though I have been in town upwards of three weeks, yet I have hitherto deferred writing, that I might let you know when the works of Archbishop Leighton, which you desired Archer to buy for you, were to be at Eton, where you may expect to have them by the next machine, directed for you at Eton, carriage paid. The reason they could not be got sooner was owing to their being almost out of print.

May you, by the grace of God, be enabled to relish, digest, and practise the divine truths contained in the writings of this excellent prelate, than whom the Church of England never had a brighter ornament.

"But what I particularly admire in this archbishop is that spirit of patience and resignation to the Divine will, under every dispensation, which breathes throughout all his compositions, and plainly discovers itself to have been the habitual temper of his renewed heart —a temper which is the very life and soul of Christianity, and which alone can bring true peace and comfort to the mind of the believer. But, then, how is this disposition to be obtained, since false presumption is often mistaken for peace of conscience, and a stupid apathy and insensibility may make a person think he has attained a true gospel resignation, when in reality he knows not what it means. If we may believe the Scriptures, it is faith which brings peace and resignation to the soul. 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.' And again, 'Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee.' The conscience being first awakened by the Holy Spirit to see

its own defilement, and afterwards pacified by an application of the blood of sprinkling, attains a sweet composure; and, resting upon the faithfulness of the Redeemer, and the all-sufficiency of his undertaking, is assured that all things shall work together for good, to those who love God, and are called according to his purpose. This consideration makes it the desire of the Christian's heart, that the will of God may be done in him and by him, and therefore, under the most distressing circumstances or sharpest sufferings, he can say, Lord, thou knowest what is good for me better than I do for myself; therefore, not my will, but thine be done. Moreover, the soul thus brought out of darkness into the marvellous light of the Gospel, sees an amiableness and excellency in Christ Jesus, which before he knew nothing of. Once he could look upon the blessed Redeemer as having 'no form nor comeliness in him, that he should desire him;' but now he sees him 'altogether lovely, the chief among ten thousand, full of grace and truth.' Having now obtained the precious faith of God's elect, Jesus is become precious to his soul; 'for to them that believe he is precious,' says St. Peter. Time was, when this poor, perishing world, and its

riches, honours, and pleasures, ran away with his affections; but the bent of his heart being now changed, he pants only after 'the unsearchable riches of Christ,'—the honour which cometh from God, and those pleasures which are at 'his right hand for evermore.' Time was, when his own will was his rule, and the commandments, ordinances, and people of God were all irksome to him; but now, 'being born from above, and passed from death unto life,' it is the desire of his heart to be guided by the word and Spirit of God. He accounts his commandments no longer grievous, but a light and easy yoke. He says of the ordinances, 'It is good for me to be here,' and his delight is in the saints of the earth, and all such as excel in virtue. These things, my dear brother, I am well assured you know by happy experience, and most certain it is that flesh and blood hath not revealed them unto you, for the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. Human nature can rise no higher than its own source, which is earthly, sensual, and devilish;' but the anointing, which you have received of the Holy One, abideth in you, and he shall lead you into all

truth.' 'Nature,' says good Bishop Cowper, 'is stark blind to the things of grace, since these can only be apprehended by Divine illumination, nor can be taught by any other teacher than the Spirit of God.' But, though it has pleased the Lord to shew you, in some measure, the mysteries of his kingdom, yet remember that you are but 'a babe in Christ, and know but in part.' Therefore be frequent and earnest in prayer for fresh supplies of knowledge, faith, grace, and strength; and you have all possible encouragements to be so, since 'in Christ all fulness dwells, and out of that fulness we receive grace for grace.'

"Learn then to guard against self-dependence, and to live more upon Christ. See that he be made unto you wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Resign yourself to him in all his offices, as a Prophet, Priest, and King: a Prophet, to teach you; a Priest, to make atonement for you; a King, to reign over you, and in you. View him in his pastoral office in the character of the Good Shepherd, 'the Shepherd that gave his life for his sheep.' Consider his watchfulness and tender care for his dear chosen flock, 'that little flock to whom it is his good pleasure to give the kingdom,'

having redeemed them by his blood 'out of every tongue, kindred, and people,' having promised them eternal life, and 'betrothed them unto himself in faithfulness, that they might never perish, and none might pluck them out of his hands.'

"Consider, my dear brother, how that when you, as a poor helpless sheep, were gone astray, this dear Shepherd sought you, and brought you back. Remember how, when wandering further and further from his fold, he made you hear his voice and follow him, 'carrying you as a lamb in his bosom, and gently leading you whilst you were yet young.' O think of this 'love which passeth knowledge,' and may it fill your heart with praise, and your tongue with thanksgiving. Let it constrain you to live to Him who died for you, and to grow daily more and more in conformity to his blessed image, that so you may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, and by well-doing put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, who would falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

"But remember that it is not sufficient that you set yourself against outward sins; you must be watchful against heart sins—those sins that

are most woven in you by nature and constitution. Therefore try and examine yourself, what manner of spirit you are of; take the psalmist's advice, 'Commune with your own heart, and in your chamber, and be still.' Fear not to know the worst of your case at all times, since this is the only way to mend it; whilst self-ignorance and self-conceit have shipwrecked their thousands. Let pride, peevishness, and self-will be brought forth, lamented, mortified; and, instead of these, seek to put on all the tempers and dispositions of the meek and lowly Jesus, with all the sweet and lovely graces of his Spirit. Bear patiently the perverseness and oddities of those who are under the dominion of fallen nature, and therefore objects of pity, not of revenge. Condescend to the lowest offices for the lowest people, when you can thereby render the best service either to their souls or bodies. 'Become all things to all men,' as far as you can consistently with your holy profession; yet take care that you abuse not your liberty for a cloak to sin; for sin in the least degree allowed or consented to, will damp your comfort, deaden your graces, and hinder your progress in the divine life. See then that you be watchful against the first risings of sin; daily

not with so dangerous an enemy. And though it will plead hard to be spared, give it no quarter; but clothe yourself with the whole armour of God, and fight like a true Christian soldier, in the strength, and under the banners, of the great Captain of your salvation, till Satan be bruised under your feet, and death be swallowed up in victory.

"I shall add one word more, and I have done. Be diligent in your studies. However human learning may prove a snare to such as are 'vainly puffed up in their fleshly minds,' yet in a gracious heart it is very desirable. And if it be your prayer and endeavour, that whatsoever attainments you make in profane literature may be subservient to the nobler end of rendering you instrumental to the good of souls, and useful to the church of Christ, there is no fear of your being hurt by those detestable maxims and principles with which the most admired classical authors abound; but they will rather be the means of discovering to you the blindness and depravity of human nature, and the necessity of seeking that only true wisdom 'that cometh from above,' and without which all other wisdom will prove in the end to be only refined folly.

"And now, with my sincere prayers, that if

it be the will of God ever to call you to the work of the ministry, you may be fitted and prepared by his grace and Holy Spirit for that most important office; and by your steady attachment to our most excellent church, in a season wherein there is so dreadful a departure from the doctrine of her homilies, articles, and common prayer, may prove yourself a faithful labourer in the vineyard of our blessed Lord, I conclude myself

"Your most affectionate Brother,

"Both by grace and nature,

"RICHARD HILL."

Mr. Hill carefully preserved this letter, and in April 1794, sent a copy of it to the Evangelical Magazine, with this remark: "It was written to me by my brother, Sir Richard, when I was first called to the knowledge of the truth, being at that time a boy at Eton school. He was then himself but young in the divine life. Perhaps what was a blessing to *me* may likewise be profitable to some young persons among your readers in similar circumstances."

It was soon after he reached the age of eighteen, that Mr. Hill entered into his Master's "sweet service," as he frequently termed it.

He was fond of illustrating his grateful feelings at that time, by relating the tale of a poor negro who had been kindly treated by his employer. After he had been some time in his service, the worthy master said to him, "Now you are of age, you may go where you please, and serve any master you think proper. I did not buy you to keep you as a slave, but that you might enjoy the sweets of liberty. You can leave my house to-morrow, if you like." The poor slave was melted by the power of kindness, and, with the deepest emotion, he exclaimed, "Me leave you, my dear massa; oh! not for all de world. Me want no wages to serve you; if massa turn me out at one door, me will come in at de oder." Our beloved friend was tired of the bondage of sin, but in the service of the Redeemer he found "perfect freedom."

In reference to his own conversion, and his religious feelings at this period, he wrote the following striking lines:—

Did ever one of Adam's race
Cost thee, my Lord, more toil and grace,
Than I have done, before my soul
Could yield to thy Divine controul!

How great the power, how vast the sway,
That first constrained me to obey!
How large the grace thou didst impart,
Which conquer'd sin, and won my heart!

Vile was my heart, deep plunged in sin;
A dismal den of thieves within;
Where every lust presum'd to dwell,
The hateful progeny of hell.

A deep apostate from my God,
I trampled on the Saviour's blood;
I scorn'd his mercy, mock'd his pain,
And crucified my Lord again.

But, lo! the chief of sinners now
Is brought before thy throne to bow:
Surely this mighty power from thee
Can conquer all that conquers me.

Hail, dearest Lord, my choicest love,
By pity drawn from realms above,
I wonder at that grace of thine,
That won a heart so vile as mine.

The mind of Mr. Hill was now deeply impressed with the supreme importance of religion. He frequently referred to the subject in his subsequent ministry, when appealing to young

people. In the last sermon he preached, he thus encouraged the sinner to come to the Redeemer: "You are not farther from God than Saul of Tarsus was; you are not farther off from God than I was when first I went to Eton school; there never was a sinner fonder of this world, or farther from the fear of God, than I was then; but God made me wise by his own power."

Whilst he remained at Eton, which was about four years, he was zealously employed in the service of his Lord and Master. With youthful ardour and zeal, and under the constraining influence of "first love," he was anxious to bring his companions to the Saviour. Nor was he permitted to labour in vain; for he had abundant evidence that souls had even then been greatly benefited through his instrumentality.

During his residence at Eton, Mr. Hill frequently displayed the wit and humour which, through life, enriched his conversation. There was once a discussion among the scholars on the letter H. Some contended that it had the full power of a letter, but others thought it was a mere aspirate, and that it might be omitted altogether, without any disadvantage to our

language. Mr. Hill earnestly contended for its continuance, adding, "To me the letter H is a most invaluable one, for if it be taken away, I shall be *ill* all the days of my life."

At the close of 1764, Mr. Hill removed to Cambridge. He first entered as a pensioner at St. John's, but afterwards he became a fellow commoner. At this time he was decidedly devoted to God, and this was his strong defence against the peculiar temptations to which he was then exposed. Miss Jane Hill, when writing to Lady Glenorchy, refers to Rowland's* residence at Cambridge, and gives a painful description of the times. "I trust," she remarks, "that he will ever stand faithful to the cause of his crucified Master, whether he be admitted as a minister of the gospel, to preach in his name, or not; but, alas, to such a deplorable apostacy is the world come, that young men who are steadfastly attached to the church, and live exemplary lives, can hardly get their testimonials signed for orders."

Even at this period, there were a few persons at Cambridge who were willing to deny themselves, to take up the cross, and to follow Christ.

* Lady Glenorchy's Life, page 89.

The late Rev. David Simpson, of Macclesfield, Pentycross, of Wallingford, and others, counted it all joy to suffer persecution for their Master's sake.

Mr. Hill, when speaking of Mr. Robinson of Leicester, said, "He was pointed at with myself at Cambridge, as being out of the common way. He was not ashamed to be known as the friend of those who were stigmatized for their religion, though he might not strictly accord with them in sentiment or in conduct." He was conversing one day in the walks with a fellow-commoner of his own college, when Mr. Hill passed by, whom the person he was conversing with seemed surprised that he should notice; so great was the contempt in which decidedly religious people were then held in the university. On his inquiring who he was, Mr. Robinson answered gravely, 'It is Mr. Hill of St. John's.'" *

Mr. Hill, in the following extract, describes the occupations of the pious band of his friends, during their residence at Cambridge:—

"Our custom was to read with each other the Greek Testament, and other evangelical

* Vaughan's Life of Rev. Thomas Robinson, of Leicester, page 25.

publications: these meetings we always concluded with prayer. The university was almost in total darkness. No wonder, therefore, if, for such exercises, and for some other strong symptoms of a *methodistical bias*, we were specially marked, and had the honour of being pointed at as the curiosities of the day. This did good. Others soon joined us, to the number of ten or twelve: some of them were *Nicodemian disciples;* others have proved bold and useful ministers; and some of them, I trust, have been taken to glory." *

Mr. Hill had not been long at Cambridge before his fame reached the excellent, though eccentric John Berridge, the vicar of Everton. He dispatched a faithful messenger with a note, requesting an interview with Mr. Hill, which soon afterwards took place. It is important for ministers to watch over and encourage youthful disciples, since a word in season, or an affectionate admonition, may preserve them in the hour of temptation, and prove a peculiar blessing to them, and to the church of Christ. In after life, Mr. Hill frequently referred to his sabbath-day journeys to Everton. He once remarked, "In my younger days, the very thought

* First Journal, page 4.

of the rising Sabbath was very pleasant indeed to my mind; oh, how delightful was the sunshine upon the day in which my God was to be served; when I went into his sanctuary with an appetite for the sacred service, and with a desire to say, "An hour spent in thy house is better than all I can spend elsewhere." In reference to the commencement of his religious course, he would often say, "I have never regretted that I went too young to the dear Redeemer; but I have often regretted that I did not go to him much earlier than I did."

The ministry of Mr. Berridge, and his private counsels, were useful to his young friend, though it is to be feared that the singularities of that good man strengthened those peculiar traits in Mr. Hill's character, which occasionally led him to forget the sanctity of the pulpit. "Mr. Berridge," remarks Mr. Newton, "was a first-rate man, both as a minister and a Christian, but he could not easily restrain his natural turn for humour and drollery. This was certainly a blemish, especially when he brought it into the pulpit."

Under the counsels of Mr. Berridge, and other friends, Mr. Hill preached "the unsearchable riches of Christ" before he had completed

his collegiate course. His first attempt appears to have been in a cottage on his father's estate, where he expounded to the poor people portions of Holy Scripture. He afterwards preached in the neighbourhood of Cambridge, and, accompanied by Pentycross, Simpson, and others, he visited in jails, workhouses, and sick rooms, calling sinners to repentance.

On one of these occasions he met with a young man, who was about to be executed for robbery. "After I and Mr. Pentycross prayed with him," he says, "I asked him, before the executioner came for his body to be hung up at the prison-door, "Can you give me any hope that God has answered our prayers, and broken your heart?" The poor man, rattling his chains, being fast bound in misery and iron, burst into tears, and said, "O Sir, my heart is as hard as a stone." This fact was frequently mentioned by Mr. Hill, in appealing to sinners, and accompanied by the fervent prayer, "From hardness of heart, and contempt of thy holy word and commandments, O Lord deliver us."

In the year 1766, Mr. Hill became personally and intimately acquainted with Whitefield, with whom he corresponded, seeking his counsel when the subject of severe persecution

From that devoted man he received several letters, urging him to persevere in his course, and assuring him that dear old Berridge, and good Lady Huntingdon, with many others, truly rejoiced that he was counted worthy to suffer persecution for the sake of a crucified but risen Saviour. Mr. Hill firmly followed his friend's advice, and, through evil and good report, preached to perishing sinners "repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."

Mr. Hill entertained the greatest veneration for his beloved Whitefield. He preserved his letters with much care, and read them occasionally to the members of his church. He had an excellent bust of him in his library, and always appeared anxious to follow in his steps, not only as a preacher, but as an earnest suppliant at the throne of grace, for he considered the great secret of Whitefield's success to be his power in prayer. At the close of the Sabbath-day, after preaching three or four times, Whitefield would fall upon the floor, and wrestle with God for a blessing on his labours, and continue long in fervent supplication, before he took any refreshment.

Mr. Hill used to mention an interesting

incident, which took place during one of his visits to Mr. Whitefield. This eloquent and successful preacher was requested to call on a poor woman, who had been dreadfully burnt. He promptly obeyed the summons, and prayed with the sufferer. Soon after he left her, she exclaimed, "Where is Mr. Whitefield? I must see Mr. Whitefield." Her friends urged Mr. W—— to visit her a second time, when he again went and prayed with her. Her friends came a third time, when Mr. Hill, perceiving the painful impressions the affecting scene had produced upon his friend's mind, urged him not to go, as he could not expect to do any good. "I shall never forget," said Mr. Hill, "his reproving words: 'Leave me, Sir; my Master can save to the *uttermost*, to the *very uttermost*,'" and immediately proceeded to the distressed female.

Mr. Hill's beautiful sketch of Whitefield's character and success, will interest the reader: "It pleased God to give him a most enlarged mind, and liberated him from all the wretched trammels of education. He knew no party; his glory was to preach the Gospel to every creature. Bigotry his soul abhorred; and, like a second Samson, he has so made her main

supporting pillars to totter, that we may rejoice that she trembles to the very foundation, and daily live in hope that her entire destruction shall complete our joy. Now, though I cannot thank the devil for any thing, yet I will say, I thank God for that permissive providence, whereby that great man, being turned out of the churches, esteemed it his duty to preach at large. His first attempt was among the poor Kingswood colliers; and I defy any missionary upon earth to find a darker spot, or to visit a more benighted people. These he called out of the holes and dens of the earth, and to these he preached 'repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.' Oh! it was a lovely sight to behold the glorious effect! Eyes unaccustomed to weep before, now began to flow with the tears of repentance unto life; white streaks appearing thereby on their black faces, now turned up towards heaven, praying for mercy and forgiveness. Knees unaccustomed to prayer before, were now bent in fervent devotion before God; and their lives well and wisely regulated by the power of that grace which had done such wonders in their hearts."*

* Gospel Grace, p. 5.

The early path of Mr. Hill was not without thorns. He found that through much tribulation he had to enter the kingdom of God. Not only were his parents opposed to his religious course, but his tutor strongly condemned his irregularities. In his latter years he occasionally referred to parental opposition, but always with the feelings of a great mind. Never did he forget the Divine command, "*Honour* thy father and mother."

There is a statement in circulation in the neighbourhood of Hawkestone, that an affecting scene was once witnessed in the family mansion. The parents of the youthful preacher insisted on his giving up his erratic career, while the son respectfully but firmly contended for liberty of conscience. At the moment a positive threat of exclusion from the family circle was issued, the Divine words cheered the sufferer, and kept him steadily to his purpose: "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up."

The mind of Mr. Hill was formed in too sensitive a mould not to feel most keenly the opposition he experienced. On his return to the beautiful and splendid scenery of Hawkstone, though surrounded by the most lovely attractions of

nature, he found no peace. His own remark on the subject strongly describes his condition. "Hawkestone is now a furnace indeed." But he was enabled, through the timely grace given to him, "to glorify his heavenly Father in those fires." At the close of his life he was walking on the terrace at Hawkestone," states Mr. Sidney, "when he remarked to a lady who was with him, and who had witnessed the affectionate attentions which were paid him by Sir John Hill and his family, "You have seen how I am now received here, but in my youth I have often paced this spot bitterly weeping; while by most of the inhabitants of yonder house, I was considered as a disgrace to my family. But," he added, whilst the tears fell down his aged cheeks, "it was for the cause of my God."

The father of our venerable friend allowed him but a small annual income, on account of his strong disapproval of his conduct. It was, therefore, a common occurrence for him to travel in his Master's service, not having a shilling in his pocket, and without knowing in the morning "where he should rest at night." His mother, from her mistaken notions of religion, was his strongest foe. Mr. Hill felt very deeply her removal from the world, and improved

the event at the Tabernacle in London, from 2nd Samuel xxiii. 5, "Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow."

Notwithstanding, Mr. Hill found his greatest spiritual foes to be those of "his own household," yet he continued to preach the word "in season and out of season."

In his village labours he was often insulted by the people, and considered by them a wild enthusiast, although he spake "the words of truth and soberness." He frequently referred to these seasons with calm delight, persuaded that he was then made the means of leading many souls to the Redeemer.

At this period there was much excitement in the public mind, in consequence of the itinerant labours of Whitefield, Wesley, and others. Several devoted laymen were active in preaching "the unsearchable riches of Christ;" and among them was the zealous and laborious Captain Scott, a friend of the Countess of Huntingdon. Speaking of this lay brother, Mr. Hill says, "I knew him a preacher in his red coat, before he left the army. Since he has been in the

ministry of the word, he has proved himself a labourer that needs not be ashamed, and still continues to bring forth fruit in his old age. Would to God it were my lot to encourage a thousand such soldiers and lay preachers in the same blessed cause."*

Mr. Berridge also rejoiced in these varied efforts to bring sinners to Christ, although the active labourers met with much opposition from "many prudent and regular ministers." In answering the letter of a clergyman who inquired how he should judge whether he was called to the office of an itinerant, Mr. Berridge replied in the following characteristic manner :

"If you are enabled to speak without notes, —feel an abiding desire to preach the Gospel, —meet with calls for this purpose,—comply with the calls,—find the word sealed,—and if persecuted and threatened, have the word given for support:—where these concur, I have no doubt but such a minister is designed for a *rural dean*, or a *rambling bishop*. You must wave the Gospel-flag, and magnify the Saviour supremely. Speak it with a full mouth, that

* Tour through the Highlands, p. 4.

his blood can wash away the foulest sins, and his grace subdue the stoutest corruptions. Expect plain fare and plain lodging where you preach, yet perhaps better than your Master had. Suffer no treats to be made for you, but live as your host usually lives, else he may grow weary in entertaining you. The chief blocks in your way will be the *prudent Peters*, who will beg, entreat, and beseech you to avoid irregularity. Give them the same answer that Christ gave Peter, Matt. xvi. 23."*

Early in the year 1768, an event happened, which agitated the members of both the English universities, and seemed intended as an admonition to all the irregular troops. Six pious young students were expelled from St. Edmund Hall, in Oxford, for praying, reading, singing hymns, and exhorting each other in private and religious meetings!

Mr. Hill, and his brother, Sir Richard, felt deeply interested for the persecuted students. The following particulars appeared in the St. James's Chronicle, for Thursday, the 17th of March, 1768.

"On Friday last, March 9, 1768, six stu-

* Evangelical Magazine, May, 1794.

dents, belonging to St. Edmund Hall, were expelled the University, after a hearing of several hours, before Mr. Vice-Chancellor, and some of the heads of houses, for holding methodistical tenets, and taking upon them to pray, read, and expound the Scriptures, and sing hymns in a private house.* The principal of the College, the Rev. Dr. Dixon, defended their doctrines from the thirty-nine articles of the established Church, and spoke in the highest terms of the piety and exemplariness of their lives; but his motion was overruled, and sentence pronounced against them. Dr. Dixon observed that, as these six gentlemen were expelled for having too much religion, it would be very proper to inquire into the conduct of some who had too little. Mr. Vice-Chancellor was heard to tell their chief accuser that the University was much obliged to him for his good work.

"The following are the names of the young men, and the sentence pronounced against them, namely, James Matthews, Thomas Jones, Joseph Shipman, Benjamin Kay, Erasmus Middleton, and Thomas Grove.

* The house of Mrs. Durbridge, the widow of one of Mr. Whitefield's devoted friends.

"For the crimes above mentioned, we, David Durell, D.D., Vice-Chancellor of the University, and Visiter of the Hall; Thomas Randolph, D.D., President of Christ Church College; Thomas Fothergill, D.D., Provost of Queen's College; Thomas Nowell, D.D., Principal of St. Mary's Hall; and the Rev. Mr. Atterbury, A.M. of Christ Church, Senior Proctor, deem each of them worthy of being expelled the Hall; I therefore, by my visitorial power, do hereby pronounce them expelled.

The case of these persecuted students was ably supported by Sir Richard Hill, in his "Pietas Oxoniensis," and also by the learned Dr. Horne, the Bishop of Norwich. The "Shaver," and other caustic works, also made their appearance on this occasion.

The state of public feeling at this time, may be gathered from the remarks on Sir Richard Hill's defence of these young men by one of the reviewers of the day, "We have not lately met with so able a vindication of orthodoxy and modern fanaticism, and we cannot but apprehend that if its contents are not properly exposed and refuted, such a performance may impose on, and mislead many an unwary reader. The progress of methodism among us is now

become so considerable, that it seems to be high time for rational religion and common sense to keep a good watch, and defend themselves against its encroachments, lest we again be overwhelmed by an inundation of pious barbarism, worse than that of those spiritual Goths and Vandals, the monks."*

Happily for the members of the church of England, these times of persecution have passed away. Long before Mr. Hill's removal from this world, he said, "Blessed be God, things now bear a more pleasing aspect in the University. The Gospel is at present not only faithfully preached by Mr. Simeon and others; but many young men are training up, who, I trust, will, if worldly prudence and the fear of man prevent not, prove a blessing to the church, by preaching, with fervency and zeal, her long-neglected doctrines to the consciences of their hearers."†

During Mr. Hill's residence at Cambridge, he was much attached to Johnny Stittle, one of Mr. Berridge's converts, who afterwards became a lay preacher. He was naturally a gifted man,

* Monthly Review, June, 1768

† First Journal, p. 4.

though, like his patron, he moved in his own orbit. He preached for many years in Green-street, Cambridge, and died in 1813, in his eighty-seventh year. He was "a workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." The collegians would sometimes hear him on account of his remarkable eccentricities, when the word frequently reached the hearts of vain, thoughtless young men, and they retired from the conventicle to their rooms, to mourn over their sins,

> Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway,
> And fools who came to scoff remained to pray.

On one occasion, when Mr. Hill was on his way to Duxford, to preach for the Missionary Society, he suddenly exclaimed, "I must go to Cambridge, and see the widow of an old clergyman, who lives there,—for I have a message to leave with her." He was urged not to go,—but he was firm to his purpose. He spent a short time with the venerable widow, and reached Duxford just before the evening service. On entering his friend Mr. Pyne's house, he said, "Dear me, I quite forgot to leave the message with the widow," and seemed almost determined to return to Cambridge. He, however, remained during the service, and on being

asked whether the message he had forgotten was important, he replied, "Yes, sir, I wanted the old lady, who will soon be in heaven, to give my love to Johnny Stittle, and tell him I shall soon see him again."

Mr. Hill's individual attachments were remarkably strong, and generally continued through life. "It is now more than twenty-eight years," remarked the pious Cornelius Winter, "that I have enjoyed Mr. Hill's friendship. — If the same degree of bounty and honour had been in some pretending friendship, that I have proved in him, there had not been such diversity in my memoirs." This attachment was reciprocal. Hence Mr. Hill mentions in his first tour, "Preached for my good old apostolic brother, Mr. Winter. A better or purer man lives not, to adorn the church of Christ."

Early in the year 1769, Mr. Hill obtained the degree of B. A. He was a diligent student, notwithstanding his numerous engagements, and though "a fellow-commoner," his name appeared in the list of honours.

Immediately after the completion of his studies at Cambridge, he was anxious to obtain ordination, but his irregular course threw many difficulties in his way. On this subject he says,

"For visiting the sick and imprisoned, and expounding the Scriptures in private houses, I met with no less than six refusals, before I gained admission into the established church,—but, blessed be God, all this proved for the furtherance of the Gospel. 'The wrath of man shall praise him, and the remainder thereof shall he restrain.'"

The mind of Mr. Hill was kept in painful suspense for nearly four years on the subject of ordination. During this period, however, he was "instant in season and out of season," in his Master's work. He not only preached in dissenting chapels, but continued his itinerating tours through many parts of England. He was pelted with eggs and stones, lampooned, and burnt in effigy; but "none of these things moved him."

On the death of Whitefield, in 1770, it was generally supposed that Mr. Hill would succeed him at the Tabernacle and Tottenham court chapels; but this was not the will of God. Mr. Hill was anxious for episcopal ordination, and was not disposed to take a step which might have excluded him altogether

* First Journal, p. 5.

from official connexion with the established church. His labours in both chapels were greatly blessed by the Holy Spirit, and under one sermon at Tottenham-court many sinners were led to inquire, "What shall I do to be saved?"

Mr. Berridge, in his usual quaint manner, in a letter to Lady Huntingdon, dated May 8th, 1771, thus notices Mr. Hill's preaching at Bath:—"I find you have got honest Rowland down to Bath: he is a pretty young spaniel, fit for land or water, and has a wonderful yelp. He forsakes father and mother and brethren, and gives up all for Jesus;—and I believe will prove a useful labourer, if he keeps clear of petticoat snares. The Lord has owned him much at Cambridge, and in the north, and I hope will own him more abundantly in the west."

In 1771, on the Sabbath evening of the 17th of June, Mr. Hill preached, for the first time, in the market-place of Wottonunderedge, Gloucestershire, from Eph. v. 19, and the good effects of the attempt he then commenced have continued to this day. In that town he afterwards built a tabernacle for God, endowed alms-houses for its members, and made it his summer residence. There many sinners have been led to God, and

the "despised intinerant," by his will, has made arrangements for supporting the religious interest which he established in that town.

Mr. Hill appears at this season "to have experienced it to be all joy that he was counted worthy to suffer persecution" for the sake of his dear Master. Though he was passing through the paths of tribulation, yet all his trials were to be overruled for the promotion of his Saviour's cause. The Christian plant must often be watered by affliction, ere it comes to maturity, or its beauties can be fully developed.

At this time Mr. Hill wrote the following letter to his dear friend in affliction, Mr. Pentycross, afterwards vicar of Wallingford:—

"Wells, Aug. 1, 1770.

"My dear Penty,

"I never sat down to write you with such a glee as at present, since I have known you. From the very bottom of my soul I wish you joy, on account of your being an outcast for God. This good news I had about nine days ago from Mr. Ivison, my dear friend, of Leeds. I could scarce help writing to you immediately, but have, with much pain, waited till you could have this letter free. Your rejection pleases

me so much the better, on account of your having met with it from my old friend, the prelate of York, who was the last, blessed be God, that put the same honour upon me. At first, when they began to reject me, I was coward enough to give way to my fears, and fool enough to conclude that unless I went forth overlaid with black, the very colour of the devil, I never should prevail; but blessed be God that every day's experience more fully proves to me that all my fears were nothing but deceit. Will my dear Penty (though he has frequently rebuked me for it) suffer me to boast myself a little; while I think I may venture to say, I mean it not for my glory, but for *your* encouragement. The poorest of the poor, and the vilest of the vile, is the only character that at all times I mean to claim as my own, while, at the same time, may I be enabled to give all the glory to the power of triumphant grace, that in any measure helps us to go forward. Thousands and thousands attend all about these parts, and the evident power of great grace is abundantly amongst us. We have more than enough daily before our eyes, fully to convince us that no human garb, or human authority, shall ever be wanting, when the power of the Gospel is

present to heal. Upon the whole, every day's experience more fully satisfies me that all things that have ever hitherto happened, have been entirely for the best.

"I do not, however, my dear brother, mean to lay down my conduct as a rule for your walk; no, I trust, from my soul, that I detest the thought of ever assuming that place in any man's conscience, which so strictly belongs to God. My only and ardent prayer for you is, that God may abundantly baptize you with his Holy Spirit—first fit you for his will, and then teach you what it is. If your eye is but simple, and your heart indeed devoted to God, no doubt you will not long be left in the dark.

"After having said thus much, I mention what follows in general terms. As a despised outcast, and servant of the dear Lord Jesus, I can answer for hundreds, yea, I may say thousands, that long to have the honour to receive you, as a messenger of the Gospel, in their open arms. I can answer for Bristol above all places besides,—how gladly they would receive you, as their own soul! and as they have done me the unsought kindness to put me into the Tabernacle connexion in that city, and having thereby some right to send you an invitation,

I do, with multitudes of others, send you a most cordial one; if you find your heart inclined to cast your despised lot amongst us, pray come without delay. The harvest in these parts is truly very great, and our labourers are but few. Multitudes of fresh places are lately broken up, and promise wonderfully for established works, and it only grieves us that we cannot attend even half of our calls. Dear Captain Joss has been amongst us, he will help us when he returns, which, I believe, will not be for some weeks, as he is now gone to preach about Wales. He has been preaching in Gloucestershire to larger congregations than ever Mr. Whitefield had. About 15,000, or upwards, was his congregation, on the Sunday before last, at Hampton Common.

"Direct for me at the Rev. Mr. Kinsman's, Plymouth: but as I am not certain whether that direction will be sufficient, you had better ask Mr. Keene, or some of the London friends, for a surer direction; only, my dear Penty, do remember and write soon, and when you write, pray don't forget to send me the particulars of your refusal.

"Dear love awaits dear, dear Mr. Atkinson, and all other friends in London. As the last

post brought me a very kind invitation from Mr. Keene to Tabernacle and Tottenham, I know not but that before the expiration of any long time, if God spares my life, I may beat up to that part of the kingdom; in the interval, let not my dear Penty, nor any of our dear friends, ever cease to pray for their and your most sincere and affectionate,*

"ROWLAND HILL."

After much trouble and anxiety, Mr. Hill was ordained a deacon by Dr. Willis, the Bishop of Bath and Wells, on Trinity Sunday, 1773, "without any promise or condition whatever." The little parish of Kingston, near Taunton, in Somersetshire, furnished him a title for orders. He remained there as curate about twelve months.

A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a year.†

In that church he preached his first sermon on June 20th, 1773, from 1 Cor. ii. 1, 2, which he afterwards printed, with the title, "The Gospel Message," and dedicated it to the rector of the parish.

* From an original letter in the possession of Mr. Parkinson, Kingsland.

† Mr. Hill's stipend was £40.

CHAP. III.

FROM HIS CURACY AT KINGSTON TO THE OPENING OF SURREY CHAPEL.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CHURCH AT KINGSTON—EARLY RECOLLECTIONS OF MR. HILL'S LABOURS—ANECDOTES—THE FARMERS AND THEIR PIGS—THE SLEEPY HEARER OFFENDED—THE YOUNG CONVERT—MR. HILL REFUSED PRIEST'S ORDERS—HIS MARRIAGE WITH MISS TUDWAY—STATE OF THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH, AND ORIGINAL LETTER FROM ROMAINE—ROMAINE'S LABOURS AND HIS MEETINGS FOR PRAYER—LETTER FROM REV. HENRY VENN—ROBINSON OF LEICESTER—EXTRACT FROM THE LIFE OF REV. DAVID SIMPSON OF MACCLESFIELD—THE COTEMPORARIES OF MR. HILL; DR. CONYERS, CADOGAN, DE COURCY, TOPLADY, VENN, AND NEWTON—MEETINGS OF MINISTERS AT MR. NEWTON'S—REMARKS ON FAITH AND REPENTANCE—MEETINGS AT MR. NEALE'S IN ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD—MR. HILL'S LETTER TO MR. SIMPSON, OF MACCLESFIELD—SERMON AT ST. JOHN'S, WAPPING—ORIGINAL ANECDOTE RESPECTING CAMBRIDGE—LADY HUNTINGDON—BUILDING OF SURREY CHAPEL—SERVICES ON LAYING THE FOUNDATION—MR. HILL'S REMARKS ON THE CHOICE OF A MINISTER—LETTER TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL—LETTER TO MR. SIMPSON—THE OPENING OF THE CHAPEL—ANSWER TO THE REVIEWER—REGULAR SERVICES AT THE CHAPEL—ANOTHER LETTER TO MR. SIMPSON—MR. HILL'S ANXIETY EFFICIENTLY TO SUPPLY HIS PULPIT—ORIGINAL LETTER TO REV. WILLIAM BULL—SUPPLIES AT SURREY CHAPEL—THE REV. MR. SCOTT'S REMARKS ON IRREGULAR PREACHING—THE REV. HENRY VENN'S FAREWELL SERMON—REFERENCE TO HIS BIOGRAPHER—ORIGINAL LETTER—REMARKS ON MESSRS. JAY, BULL, SIBREE, ELLIOTT, AND OTHERS—EXTENT OF CONGREGATIONS—CONCLUDING REMARKS.

THE village of Kingston, where Mr. Hill commenced his stated labours, is about four miles

from Taunton.* The situation is exceedingly romantic and beautiful. The church is built on an eminence, and in approaching it we are reminded of the words of the psalmist, "Beautiful for situation is Mount Sion." In the church-yard there is a remarkably ancient yew-tree. Its roots are of great extent, but the main trunk has been riven through its centre. It now appears like nine distinct trees springing from one root. Some parts of this noble tree are considerably decayed. The church, which is dedicated to St. Mary, is a handsome Gothic edifice, eighty-six feet in length, and forty-eight in breadth, consisting of a nave, chancel, north and south aisles, the whole covered with tile. At the west end is a well-built and elegant tower, seventy feet high, adorned with sculpture, and crowned with

* This retired village is connected with the history of other interesting characters. The Rev. J. Wesley, in his Journal, in 1776, three years after Mr. Hill's settlement, states, "Being at Kingston, near Taunton, I found a clergyman, Dr. Coke, late gentleman-commoner of Jesus College, in Oxford, who came twenty miles on purpose to meet me. I had much conversation with him; and a union then began, which, I trust, shall never end."—*Watson's Life of Wesley*, p. 289.

twenty-four pinnacles. This tower has a clock, and a peal of six bells.

The living of Kingston is vicarial, in the deanery of Taunton, and is in the gift of the dean and chapter of Bristol.*

There are few things in the church to attract the attention of the stranger. There is, however, an old reading-desk, with a volume *chained* to it, containing a learned and godly sermon made in the Latin tongue, by the famous and excellent clerk, Master Jewell, late bishop of Salisbury, from 1 Peter iv. 11, with his learned "Apology for the Church of England."

This hallowed spot is peculiarly interesting, from the fact that, *here* the venerable pastor of Surrey Chapel, sixty years ago, preached his first sermon in a pulpit of the established church. The hearers have, most of them, passed into eternity, but Rowland Hill is not yet forgotten. "The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance." The aged villagers recite with pleasure the tales which have been handed down from father to son. Two will

* Collinson's History and Antiquities of Somerset, Vol. iii. p. 263.

here be given, which were simply detailed by a venerable man, who heard the first sermon Mr. Hill preached.

"Mr. Hill once offended the farmers mortally," said the villager, "by saying that they were as bad as their very pigs. Several of them were assembled in a house at the bottom of the village, when Mr. Hill happening to pass by, they called him in, and demanded an explanation of his assertion. He immediately consented to give it. "Now," said Mr. Hill, "look at your pigs; when the acorns drop, they do not go under the elm in search of them, but under the oak; and when they have swallowed all they can find, off they go, without giving a single look at the tree which has furnished their meal. So you, like your pigs, know where to go to look for your wheat, and other produce; and when your barns are filled with plenty, like them, you forget to look up to the Source whence all your blessings have been obtained." The farmers were pleased with the readiness of the preacher, though they did not much relish his homely but well sustained comparison.

These worthy cultivators of the soil once complained that the preacher ranted so loudly.

that he could be heard through the village. Mr. Hill referred to these remarks in the pulpit, and with the deepest feeling exclaimed while pointing to a sleeping farmer, "What! shall we not lift up our voice like a trumpet, and cry aloud, and spare not, when, with all our ranting, sinners can sleep, and be damned under our very sermons?" The old farmer opened his eyes, and heard the last remark. He rose, and left the church, and declared he would never enter it again, — a sinful resolution, which, it is said, he never broke. Personalities from the pulpit should be avoided, but it is an awful thing for hearers either to despise or to quarrel with the truth when faithfully preached.

Another fact must be recorded.—In the neighbouring parish to Kingston, a young female was living with her uncle and aunt. Having heard much said about Rowland Hill, she went to hear him. The word came to her heart with power, but, for some time, she was alarmed rather than convinced. The friends of this female were opposed to evangelical truth, and after they discovered the effects produced upon her mind, it was with great difficulty she could escape to the church. On one occasion,

after hearing Mr. Hill, this young female felt that she was an unpardoned sinner; and on returning home she retired into an orchard and fell on her knees, and there sought for mercy. The spot where her first prayer ascended to God, is dear to several relatives who still survive. This young person became an eminently devoted character; she married, and had nine children, whom she trained up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; several of them still live, and are followers of the Saviour, and one son is faithfully preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Thus it will be seen that the brief labours of Mr. Hill, at Kingston, were not without success. He has met, we doubt not, some converts from this retired hamlet before the throne of God.

The refusal of several bishops to ordain Mr. Hill did not induce him to discontinue "his irregular mode" of proclaiming the gospel to sinners, which led the bishop of Carlisle to refuse him priest's orders. He was, therefore, obliged to pass through life "wearing only one ecclesiastical boot."

After leaving his curacy at Kingston, Mr. Hill preached in the neighbourhood of Hawkstone, the residence of his father, who continued his

opposition to his son, with the hope of bringing him back into that vineyard in which it was his desire that he should exclusively labour.

Mr. Hill sought a temporary retirement in Yorkshire, and remained for a season with an old college friend, who greatly encouraged him in his course. At Leeds, he was the means of enlightening many souls, and thus he had the approbation of the Lord, though many men "were speaking evil of him." He afterwards preached with great success at the Tabernacles in London, Plymouth, and Bristol. At this period of his life "he walked by faith," through a clouded path. All earthly things were against him, and yet he believed that he was pursuing the course which was agreeable to his heavenly Father's will. His itinerant labours were eminently useful, particularly among the colliers at Kingswood near Bristol.

In 1773, Mr. Hill contemplated a most interesting change in his condition of life. He had formed a strong attachment to Miss Tudway, whose brother represented the city of Wells in parliament. Mrs. Hill once referred to this subject in conversation with the writer: "Little did I think," said she, looking to Mr. Hill, "when I first saw you at Mr. ——'s party, that you

would ever be my husband; you appeared unhappy all the evening, stood alone, and seemed to be something quite out of place." Mr. Hill smiled at the remark; in fact, he was not "of the world," and could find no pleasure in any of its pursuits.

In his first letter to Miss Tudway he made a manly avowal of his affection, and at the same time reminded her of the life he was likely to lead as an itinerant preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ. One noble sentence will be found in that letter: "Can you be contented to see me a despised pilgrim for my once despised Master, rejected for my labours, and reproached for my God?"*

Mr. Hill and Miss Tudway were married at Mary-le-bone Church, London, on May the 23d, 1773. There was no issue of this union; it was the source, however, of much earthly comfort to both parties. Mrs. Hill appears to have been through life but little known beyond her own immediate circle.

Throughout the very long connexion which existed between Mr. and Mrs. Hill, the latter never attempted to retard the labours of her husband. If at times she appeared to cast diffi-

* Sydney's Life of Hill, p. 77.

culties in his way, it was from a tender regard for his health, and not to promote her own comfort. No one rejoiced more than she did in his spiritual prosperity, and no one was more anxious that her beloved husband should abound in the work of the Lord. After Mr. Hill became possessed of a fortune which enabled him to exercise great liberality, she would sometimes gently but prudently pull the curb, knowing that he would give away his last shilling with joy, without remembering the just claims of his own household. Mrs. Hill was the faithful chronicler of his engagements, which she always recorded in an interleaved copy of an almanack.

The state of the church of England, at this period, deeply interested the mind of Mr. Hill: although he had incurred the displeasure of some of his regular brethren, he continued firm in his attachment to episcopacy, and to the general discipline of the church, from which the shades of a long night were beginning to retire.

Romaine had been labouring with considerable success, though under many difficulties. In 1741 that excellent man made his first appearance in London, as chaplain to Sir Daniel Lambert, who was in that year chosen

lord mayor of London; by this appointment "a door of utterance was opened to him in the cathedral church of St. Paul."* At this time Whitefield and Romaine were contemporaries, but not companions,† for the latter appears to have carefully avoided the meetings which were held by the irregular priests. He was, however, on affectionate terms with good old Berridge of Everton, and the devoted Grimshaw who was successfully preaching at Howorth. In 1749 Romaine was chosen lecturer of St. Dunstan's in the West, and in 1750 he was morning preacher at St. George's, Hanover-Square. At this time he was "almost, if not altogether, the only preacher in the established church, from Hyde Park Corner to Whitechapel, where those who were acquainted with the pure gospel of the grace of God could have it to their satisfaction and edification.‡ The feeble sounds from the Lock hospital,§ as Dr. Haweis remarks, met at St. Dunstan's those which echoed from St. Saviour's, Southwark."‖

* Cadogan's Life of Romaine, p. 7.

† Haweis's Life of Romaine, p.18. ‡ Ibid. p. 56, 76.

§ Dr. Haweis was Chaplain.

‖ Here the Rev. Mr. Jones faithfully preached the Gospel.

The following letter was written by Mr. Romaine

The restoration of the true doctrines of the cross into the pulpits of the Establishment may be traced, not only to the labours of Wesley and Whitefield, and their devoted co-adjutors, but to the petitions which were presented to the throne of grace by Romaine and his little band. In 1756 a weekly hour of prayer was agreed upon, for the special purpose of supplication for the church and its clergy.

"Once a week," remarks Mr. Romaine, "on

in June, 1762, on the death of Mr. Jones of St. Saviour's :—

"Sunday Morning, this city (London) received a most heavy stroke from the hand of God! That dear minister of the Lord, Mr. Jones of St. Saviour's, Southwark, was taken from us. He lay seven days ill of a fever, in great peace of mind. His faith was sorely attacked, but it held out, and the two last days of his life he was supported in a most wonderful manner, rejoicing in the Lord his God, and waiting with a hope full of immortality for his dissolution, which the Lord granted on Sunday morning, about 2 o'clock. Oh that our latter end may be like his! Pray for me; this is a great stroke to me: I am now alone, not one minister in any parish church to countenance me; thank God, I have One with me whose favour is better than life,—on him I depend; he never failed me yet. May he be your Saviour and my Saviour, in life and in death."

Friday I have what I call the clergy's litany, in which, after general petitions for the outpouring of the Spirit upon all the ministers of our church; I make mention by name of those of my fellow-labourers, whom God has highly honoured in making them faithful and useful in the ministry. As I go over their names, recommending them to the care, and their people to the blessing, of our Glorious Head, it is my custom to ask particularly for them, such things as I know or hear they want."*

From nine till ten o'clock on Friday mornings, a few pious Episcopalians were found at the throne of grace, for several years pleading "for the prosperity of Jerusalem." At the commencement of these special services, Mr. Romaine "could only get three or four brethren to join him,"† but he lived to see units become hundreds.‡ At the time he began to pray for poor clergymen, "the names he was able to include in his prayer did not exceed eight in the whole kingdom; but previous to his death they were become so numerous that he was obliged to divide his prayers, and offer them up

* Life of Romaine, by Dr. Haweis, page 112.
† Ibid. p. 111. ‡ Cadogan's Life of do. p. 56.

on two days instead of one."* At the time of his death in 1795, there were more than five hundred clergymen, whom he regarded as fellow-labourers with himself in word and doctrine."†

In February 1774, Mr. Venn, writing to a friend, mentioned the settlement of Mr. Robinson at Leicester; on which event he remarks: "Welcome, thrice welcome, the news of the gospel, thus spreading in large towns: when I set out, 24 years ago, I knew but of Truro and Bradford in Wiltshire. Oh! may this be but the beginning! How reviving to such as I am, now drawing nigh my departure, to behold our prayers in some degree answered by the labourers coming forth into the harvest.‡"

The biographer of Mr. Simpson in reference to the few devoted clergymen in the country at this period, remarks, "Such men at that time of day were thinly scattered, and, whenever found, had their names cast out as evil. Association was, naturally, the more sought, as was the case in the apostolic age, by *letter*; and many

* Life of Romaine, by Religious Tract Society, p. 32.

† Life of Rev. Henry Venn, M. A. Editor's Preface, page 14. ‡ Ibid. p. 209.

MSS. yet remain, to illustrate, in the instance of Mr. Simpson, its nature and advantages; the Rev. John Berridge, of Everton; the Rev. Rowland Hill; the Rev. Thomas Robinson, of Witcham, (afterwards of Leicester;) the Rev. John Fletcher, of Madeley; the Rev. H. Venn, of Yelling; and the Rev. William Romaine, must be especially mentioned; since all these eminent persons, as well as Mr. Hey, of Leeds, and many others, as existing documents discover, manifested, not only that devotedness to God for which they are severally renowned, but also that affectionate kindness, sympathy, and concern to strengthen each others hands, which marked those who supported the earliest Christian sufferers. They "agreed to remember each other in their solemn preparation for each Lord's day, by retiring on the Saturday evening, from six to seven, for prayer; to implore of the Lord, for themselves and the people, all spiritual blessings."*

The irregularities of Mr. Hill did not alienate from him the affections of his beloved brethren in the establishment, who, like him, had taken up the cross. Before the erection of Surrey

* Letter from the Rev. Henry Venn to Mr. Simpson, quoted by Sir J. B. Williams in Life of Simpson, p. 17.

Chapel we find him occupying the pulpit of his friend, the rector of St. Paul's, Deptford, Dr. Conyers, to whom he was greatly attached, He was fond of referring to the circumstance of the Doctor's conversion, as shewing the power and glory of the Scriptures. He was once reading in his Greek Testament, Eph. iii. 8. "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." "Riches of Christ," said he to himself, "unsearchable riches! what have I preached of these? what do I know of these?" Such was the beginning of new views, new sentiments, new declarations, with this truly conscientious pastor.

After the death of Dr. Conyers, Mr. Hill preached occasionally at the Greenwich Tabernacle, having promised the Doctor, before his death, never to forget the people of his flock while he continued in London.

The Hon. and Rev. William Bromley Cadogan, the vicar of St. Giles's, Reading, and afterwards the rector of St. Luke's, Chelsea, was sincerely attached to our venerable friend; and it has been stated "that Mr. Newton, Mr. Rowland Hill, and many other popular clergymen, whom he invited to his house, preached for him

occasionally."* The Rev. Richard De Courcy was also the beloved friend of Mr. Hill; he came to England in 1768, and preached for some time in Tottenham Court Chapel, and then in the chapels of Lady Huntingdon. In 1774 he was presented, by the lord chancellor, to the vicarage of St. Alkmond in Shrewsbury. He was the intimate friend and constant counsellor of Sir Richard Hill, and remained till death on friendly terms with the subject of this memoir.

The Rev. Augustus Toplady, the vicar of Broad Hembury in Devonshire, was also one of Mr. Hill's earliest associates, for whom he felt the greatest veneration, although Mr. T. frequently chided him for his wanderings from the discipline of the church. When the students were expelled from Oxford, Mr. Toplady united with Sir Richard Hill in the controversy to which that expulsion led. In 1776 he settled in the French Calvinist reformed church, in Orange St. Leicester Fields,† where he laboured little more than two years; he died on the 11th August, 1788, and was buried in Tottenham Court Chapel, on the 17th of the same month. His

* Evangelical Biography, vol. I. p. 406.

† The chapel in which the Rev. Mr. Dobson now preaches.

biographer remarks,* "The Rev. Rowland Hill, prior to the burial service, could not refrain from innocently trespassing upon the solicitation of his departed friend, by addressing the multitude on the solemn occasion, and embraced the opportunity of affectionately declaring the love and veneration he felt for the deceased. The beautiful simplicity of his pathos, and the exquisite sensibility he shewed, were more than equivalent to the most studied harangue."

The late Rev. Henry Venn, A.M., the vicar of Huddersfield, then of Yelling in Huntingdonshire, who was briefly mentioned, must not be omitted among the list of Mr. Hill's contemporaries:—"he was a faithful minister of the Church of England, but never ashamed of the brand of Methodism; he took a decided part with the cross-bearing labourers,—his work was his wages, and the redemption of souls his object, through evil report and good report.† There was sometimes an exchange of labour between these excellent ministers—Mr. Hill, after preaching in Huddersfield church, remarks: "I well remember the glory

* Life of Toplady, p. 108.

† Evangelical Biography, vol. 4. p. 328.

which attended Mr. Venn's ministry, and the solemn awe which rested on the people; he was remarkably striking in expounding the Scriptures which were read in the public service, and was supposed to be not less useful in the desk than in the pulpit."*

In the year 1764 the Rev. John Newton, "a burning and shining light," appeared in the church; he commenced his ministry at Olney in Buckinghamshire, where he became acquainted with the poet Cowper, and was on intimate terms with Mr. Bull and Mr. Greatheed of Newport, and Mr. Ryland of Northampton. In 1779 he removed to London, and through the kindness of the late John Thornton, Esq., became rector of the united parishes of St. Mary Woolnoth and St. Mary Woolchurch Haw, in Lombard Street. He most cordially entered into Mr. Romaine's plan of prayer for the revival of true religion in the church. On this subject he remarks in a letter to a friend: "I thank you for Mr. Romaine's book; I have endeavoured to observe his appointment, as likewise the Dissenters' hour on Wednesday mornings: I am, indeed, a poor intercessor; but I desire to put in my mite. Blessed be God for a prevailing

* Tour through the Highlands, p. 5.

Intercessor, a great High Priest, who hears all our prayers and all our concerns before the throne." *

This excellent man was in the habit of receiving ministers of all denominations at his house to a weekly breakfast-meeting, for prayer and the discussion of subjects connected with the Scriptures. He was firm in his attachment to episcopacy, but catholic to all who differed from him. "I love all Christians," he remarks, in a letter to Mrs. S. "however denominated: for I know some among all parties who hold the Head, the Kirk, Burghers, Antiburghers, Relief, Independents, who, notwithstanding they differ from me, and among themselves, in some points, agree with me in essentials. The Lord has given us the same views of sin and the Saviour. In smaller matters I take the liberty of judging for myself, willingly allowing the same liberty to others." † These meetings were not only beneficial to the parties who attended them, but their influence was felt in the churches with which they were connected. On one occasion, when Cecil, Foster, and several clergymen and dissenting ministers, were present, the subject

* Letter to a friend, Evang. Mag. 1831, p. 565.

† Evang. Mag. 1808, p. 417.

discussed was, "whether faith preceded repentance, or vice versa?" Many opinions were given upon the point; when Mr. Newton inquired, "Can any one tell me which begins to work first in the body, the heart or the lungs?" "Why," said one, "they work simultaneously." Mr. Newton replied, "So I think it is with faith and repentance."

Connected with the prayerful efforts for the revival of religion in London, may be mentioned another meeting, though of later date, which was also productive of much spiritual good, and in which ministers, differing on minor points, met together in Christian harmony. Mr. Neale, of St. Paul's Churchyard, who was one of Mr. Hill's oldest and most attached friends, and subsequently a member and trustee of his chapel, assisted by the venerable John Newton, established a meeting for social prayer and improvement during the awful period of the French revolution.* Mr. Newton conducted a monthly lecture in the family until the period of his death. He went through an interesting exposition of the Pilgrim's Progress, to the great edification of many who heard him. In these

* Jowett's Life of the Rev. Cornelius Neale, M. A., page 2.

pleasing engagements Mr. Hill took his part, and the union between brethren of different denominations was greatly strengthened.

The labours of Mr. Hill at this time, in immediate connection with the established church, will be seen from a letter which he addressed to his dear friend Simpson, of Macclesfield, not long before the erection of Surrey Chapel.

"My very dear, much honoured, because much persecuted, friend and brother,

Your most worthy friends Mr. and Mrs. Roe did me the favour this morning to eat a breakfast with me. Blessed be God, disinterested souls shall be borne through. Our greatest honour is to be sufferers for our God. No cross, no crown. Twice have they cast you out. I dare not direct; all that I can say is, for myself, I bless the Lord I am entirely his, and daily find the portion of the outcast is a happy one indeed. However, is not your way plain? Another door open, in which none can molest you? Be sure of this: not a hair of your head can ever be touched for preaching under toleration: nor can it hinder you of any preferment that should offer. The canon law is

nothing, having never had any parliamentary ratification. This judge Blackstone has publicly declared. Though I preach in licensed places continually, yet more churches are open to me than I can serve. Thousands in this city flock to hear, yet multitudes go away for want of room. Ecclesiastics roar, as Luther says, like bears struck on the snout; yet this, they know, is all they can do. Your share of humility and diffidence I long for exceedingly; yet a little courage to face the devil may not be amiss. The Lord knows how difficult it is to keep measures with the wretched, much to be pitied church governors of the present day. As I can sincerely assure you, I love you affectionnately, do let me hear from you how matters are to turn. Direct for me at Wottonunder-edge, Gloucestershire. There is my *parish*: my *church* is a *meeting-house*. Those parts, of late, have been remarkably evangelized. Happy should I be, indeed, to see you there with Mrs. Simpson, if you could spare time. This, perhaps, you may do while your church is building. No doubt, you have heard your poor fellow-pilgrim has got a wife as well as yourself. Next to the blessing of redemption,

she is my greatest. Pray for us both. Dear Charles sends his love.* I saw him yesterday, and to-morrow I preach for him at the Lock. Thus, blessed be God, rams' horns and silver trumpets sweetly coalesce. I congratulate you on being a father. That the choicest of blessings may rest upon you in every relationship of life, is the sincere prayer of your ever affectionate brother.†

"ROWLAND HILL."

Rev. David Simpson, Macclesfield, Cheshire.

In the year 1774, Mr. Hill appears to have enjoyed unparalleled popularity. "He preached charity sermons in many of the London churches, where the church-wardens and overseers turned Methodists *pro tempore*, and had their plates filled by the contributions of Mr. Hill's followers. He was frequently at St. John's, Wapping, and there sometimes gave way to his natural disposition for drollery, in a manner which he afterwards deeply regretted. On one of

* The Rev. Thomas Charles, of Bala.

† For this letter, and other valuable information, the writer is indebted to Sir J. B. Williams, of Shrewsbury, the author of Mr. Simpson's Life, appended to new edition of his "Plea for Religion."

these occasions, observing that his auditory was unusually large, and made up of seafaring persons, who were not celebrated for overmuch religion, he remarked, "I am come to preach to great sinners, notorious sinners, profane sinners; and with peculiar emphasis exclaimed, "yea, to *Wapping* sinners." This climax operated like an electric shock through all the congregation, and highly offended some of the inhabitants of that polite part of the town, who conceived themselves materially insulted by such a debasement of their place of abode." *

No one could be intimate with Mr. Hill, without discovering the evident satisfaction he enjoyed, when requested to occupy pulpits in the church; and, on the contrary, the severe mortification it gave him to be excluded from them.

On one occasion, he was exceedingly anxious to preach at Cambridge, and wrote to a friend he much respected, requesting him to secure for him a few church pulpits. The answer he received much annoyed him, because it suggested that his appearance in the churches might undo all that several resident clergymen had been for several years endea-

* Ecclesiastical Biography, vol. IV. p. 571.

vouring to accomplish for the spiritual good of his Alma Mater. Mr. Hill never forgot this refusal; and, when referring to the subject many years afterwards, he mentioned the following circumstance:—

"When I was last at Cambridge, I met Mr. ——. He requested me to favour him with my company at his rooms. I thought that he was not over anxious to see me, so I replied,—Sir, I have called on the Dean of Ely, on the Master of Queen's, and the Master of St. John's, but I have no time left to call upon Fellows."

Mr. Hill continued to enjoy the privilege of free intercourse with his pious brethren in the church, until the appearance of his "Spiritual Characteristics," after which he only occasionally preached for them, and then principally in country churches. This work was calculated to wound the friends, without convincing the real enemies, of the church; and though many of the characters were accurately sketched, yet it was done with the pencil of Hogarth, and not with the pen of a divine. It will be seen in a future chapter that Mr. Hill much regretted the issuing of this publication.

This brief notice of the contemporaries of Mr. Hill, prior to his settlement as a stated minister, cannot well be concluded without a reference to the excellent Countess of Huntingdon, whose efforts for the spread of evangelical piety were productive of much spiritual good. Her house in London was the resort of many devoted men. Whitefield and Romaine were both her chaplains. Mr. Hill had occasional interviews with her, and considered her "one of the most humble characters in the world;"* but still there never appears to have been much union of heart between them. Perhaps they were too much alike in disposition to act very cordially together. "Lady Huntingdon," remarks one,† "was in her temper warm and sanguine,—her predilections for some, and her prejudices for others, were sometimes too hastily adopted, and by these she was led to form conclusions not always correspondent with truth and wisdom." No one, however, rejoiced more than Mr. Hill did in the hallowed exertions of this excellent woman, and Lady Ann

* Letter to Wesley, p. 21.

† Evangelical Biography, Vol. ii. p. 548.

Erskine, her equally devoted "fellow-labourer in the Lord."

We now approach a peculiarly interesting period in Mr. Hill's history. After having preached with great success in the churches and chapels, streets, fields, and commons of London and its vicinity, he was anxious to enjoy a more settled life. In the year 1780, he felt a strong desire to introduce the gospel into the southern part of the metropolis; and, after much prayer for Divine guidance, "the cloud rested" on the spot where Surrey chapel now stands. Every particular connected with this place will be interesting to many readers.

The first meeting to consider the propriety of building this chapel, was held at the Castle and Falcon Tavern in Aldersgate-street, on February 4th, 1782. There were present, in addition to Mr. Hill, the Rev. Mr. Woodgate, the Rev. John Ryland, and several lay gentlemen. After much consideration, it was thought desirable that the proposed chapel should be erected between Blackfriars Bridge and the Obelisk in St. George's Fields. At this meeting it was determined that at least fifteen trustees should be chosen, "who should appoint and constitute the Rev. Rowland Hill as the

provider for, and director of, the pulpit, so long as he should preach according to the doctrinal articles of the church of England, and should not give the use of the pulpit to any one who was known to preach otherwise." *

Mr. Hill considered it a good regulation, that people should have their stated ministers, and that proper means should be made use of, "to provide a pure and holy ministry for the edification of the Christian church; and that the people's choice, so far as they were fit to choose, should be properly consulted."† Yet, in a large congregation, he thought it was better for the power to be delegated to a selection to be made from their own numbers." The original trustees of Surrey Chapel are all dead, but their number is still kept up by the new

* The first Trustees of Surrey Chapel were, Sir Richard Hill, bart., Rev. Rowland Hill, and Messrs. Joseph Sims, John Keysall, Edward Webster, Thomas Wilson, Samuel Lloyd, William Lloyd, John Bush, James Neale, James Webber, Thomas Bricknell, George Smith, Ambrose Martin, and John Clarke. All these excellent men have finished their earthly course. — See Mr. Hill's "Declaration of Faith," inserted in Chapter XI.

† Village Dialogues, vol. iii. p. 101.

appointments of the surviving trustees, without any reference to the church or congregation.

Mr. Hill's opinion was, that, although the people should have power to choose their minister, they should not have power to reject him. He observes, "Admitting the choice of ministers to rest with the people, it is but consistent that the further management should, in a measure, rest with others. If it be with the people to appoint, and to accuse in case of misconduct, it is but reasonable that others should determine the justice of that accusation; if the total controul rests with those that appointed him to the office, the rule is perfectly reversed: 'Obey them that have *the rule* over you, and *submit* yourselves, for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief, for that is unprofitable unto you.' Heb. xiii. 7. Supposing the controul to be with the people, it is *they* that are to have *the rule over him*, and he must be admonished by them. He is neither shepherd nor pastor to watch over, nor elder to rule over them, nor bishop to oversee them; he knows nothing of authority but by their *permission*, and is perfectly the creature of their caprice and controul. All disputes, therefore,

under such a frame of government must terminate in divisions. Now, in a strict independent government, in a variety of instances this fact is principally proved, because arbitration is wanting, and the Presbyterian government wisely provides for this arbitration.*

Perhaps Mr. Hill did not sufficiently consider that ministers can only sway the hearts of their people by the exercise of moral power. If they retain their pulpits after the affections of their flocks are lost, they are not likely to be the means of much spiritual good.

The original estimate for the building of Surrey Chapel was £3,000. but the actual cost exceeded £5,000. The subscription list was a liberal one,—but the grave has now closed upon all the original contributors. The trustees, by virtue of the power vested in them, requested Mr. Hill to become the minister of the new place.

After the necessary preparations were made for the erection of the chapel, Mr. Hill retired for a short season into Gloucestershire, from whence he wrote the following letter to Mr. Simpson,—

* First Journal, p. 81.

Rodborough, near Stroud.

"My dear old Friend,

"I received your letter last post. I should be heartily glad to promise you the assistance you request, if I thought it would be in my power to perform. All my time, at present, is taken up, in attending upon the work of building a new chapel on the Surrey side of Blackfriars Bridge; a part of the town that, for many years, has been quite destitute of the Gospel: the place is to be upon a large scale, and consequently requires much of my attention. Another circumstance confines me in London. Some good people have jealousies raised in them, lest building the new place should take me from the old ones: it is thought necessary to give them the closer attendance, that all may be convinced nothing is intended but the enlargement of the same cause. It is but a little more than a week since I left town. In about a fortnight's time, when the foundation is dug out, and the materials are prepared, I shall be called again to town, to lay the first stone; this will be about the second week in June. If possible, from thence I should be glad to make an elopement to serve you at Macclesfield. Were it a small distance from London, I would venture upon an immediate

promise; but when I consider the time and expense necessary for so long a journey, I despair of being able to accomplish my desire. My dear friend mentions my expenses being refunded.—I feel ashamed that so much money should be spent for so poor a tool; and to tell you the truth, having lately given away all I could spare, and more than I could spare, for the present chapel, my wings are considerably clipt, and must take some little time to grow again. I think, therefore, for this year, you had better, if you must have a stranger on that day, seek for another, than trust in me. Perhaps, should lives be spared, I may be more at liberty another year. If you have any thing more to say upon the subject, as I don't know that sooner than a fortnight I may be in town, you may direct your next to me under cover, to Richard Hill, Esq. M.P. Wimpole-street, Cavendish-square.

"Your old friend has much to do; his work increases upon him: he feels the burden. It is astonishing how all doors seem opening. My invitations to preach in the largest churches occur more frequently than ever. Just before I left town, our old friend Hallifax, bishop of Gloucester, and myself, preached on the same day in the same church. Bishops are now

come to high honour, to be joined with Methodist parsons. Pray for me. I need many prayers. Love to Mrs. Simpson and Nan.*

"Your most sincere, most affectionate,

"R. HILL."

"Rev. D. Simpson,
"Macclesfield, Cheshire."†

On the 24th of June, 1782, the first stone of Surrey Chapel was laid by Mr. Hill, when he preached from Isaiah xxviii. 16,—"Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation,—he that believeth shall not make haste." On this occasion great numbers were collected together. After the sermon, suitable addresses were delivered by the Rev. Messrs. Wills, Piercy, and Medley, and fervent prayer was offered up that the new Tabernacle might be filled with the glory of God.

The state of Mr. Hill's mind in the prospect of the opening of his new chapel, and his anxiety to secure the services of his much loved friend Mr. Bull on the occasion, will be seen from the following letter:—

* Afterwards Mrs. Lee.

† Sir J. B. Williams's Life of Simpson, p. 37.

"Rev. and very dear Sir,

"We propose, by the will of God, to open the new chapel, in St. George's Road, on Easter Sunday; it concerns one that the notice is so short, lest we should miss of your assistance thereby. I can only say it will rejoice the hearts of many that sincerely love you, if you can make a little elopement for the Easter week, to help us in our Gospel jubilee. If you could come and preach the afternoon or evening sermon, it would be very acceptable. There will be work enough for us all the rest of the week; if you cannot favour us with your company, you may attend us with your prayers, —the work is truly great, it is well it is recorded "our sufficiency is of God." I should be glad, dear Sir, of your immediate answer, as we are somewhat perplexed on account of the uncertainty respecting the time of opening the chapel.

"I remain, with much affection,

"Yours very sincerely,

"R. HILL."

"Mr. and Mrs. Wilson send their love."

"April 14th, 1783, Charles's Square, London."

"To Rev. Mr. Bull,

"Newport Pagnel, Bucks."

On the 8th of June, 1783, the chapel was solemnly opened for divine worship, and Mr. Hill delivered the first sermon, from 1 Cor. ch. i. 23, "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."* In the evening, the Rev. Mr. Piercy preached, from the text, "Arise, O God, and plead thine own cause."

An attempt was successfully made during the service to disturb the congregation,—a report being raised that the foundation of the building was insecure, and giving way. The confusion that ensued was very great. Mr. Hill from the pulpit endeavoured in vain to still the tempest. Many persons were materially injured, though no lives were lost. At a subsequent period a ball was fired at Mr. Hill while in the pulpit, but it providentially passed over his head: the miscreant was never discovered.

There can be no doubt that the fervent desire of Mr. Hill, expressed in his first

* See Religious Tract Society Catalogue, p. 364.

sermon, has been partly realized, "that the worship of God in Surrey Chapel might prove the beginning of happy days to thousands who were already born of God, and the cause of future joy to tens of thousands who were then dead "in trespasses and sins."

Mr. Hill printed this sermon, to prevent all misunderstanding as to the doctrines which he intended to preach,—his address on laying the foundation-stone having been grossly misrepresented. He was soon the subject of a violent attack from one of the reviews of the day. His sermon was called "the first-born child of absurdity," and it was stated that only a depraved mind could give currency to the sentiment "that the imagination of man's heart was only evil, and that continually." This strange ignorance of the Scriptures will remind the reader of the remark made by a learned barrister, "who complained of the bad taste of the evangelicals, in comparing man's own righteousness "to filthy rags!!"

Mr. Hill, in a preface affixed to his first sermon refers to his reviewer's remarks. "Their ignorance also taught them to tell the public how my infatuated hearers would walk for miles uncovered, during the severest rain, by

the side of my carriage, singing hymns; that I have frequently spoken till I have spit blood, and much injured my constitution by my extraordinarily energetic mode of delivery. Now, it would be the greatest piece of ill manners to presume to say I am well, when a body of such learned gentlemen pronounce me to be sick; yet, such are the wonderful effects of my fanaticism, that I feel no more bad consequences from my much injured constitution, than if my zeal had never exceeded the completest representative of laziness in a cassock."

The weekly services at the chapel have been since regularly held on the morning and evening of the Sabbath-day, on Monday evenings, when the members of the church meet together, and receive an address from the pastor; and also on Tuesday evenings and Friday mornings. On the Lord's day the scriptural service of the church of England is read, somewhat abridged, particularly by the omission of the communion service, which is only used at the time of the monthly administration of the ordinance.

An excellent organ was erected for the use of the congregation, which is still considered a very superior instrument, and was long played by the late Mr. Jacob, who rose to great eminence by his musical talents.

Soon after the opening of the chapel, Mr. Hill again wrote to his friend Simpson, who had urged him to preach in his new church at Macclesfield,—

"My dear old Friend, and Brother,

"It grieves me that I fear it will not be in my power to visit Macclesfield according to the affectionate wishes of my heart. London engagements much circumscribe my country excursions. However, when I *can* come to see you I will; but when that will be, I dare not promise. Penty* is now filling up my place in London; he grows greatly, and is by all accounts very lively in his ministry. Dear Mr. Venn has also been giving us a helping hand; and, I am sorry to add, he now labours under a dangerous indisposition, that indicates something of the dropsy. Oh that such valuable lives may be spared! You know you are in my debt, and when you come to London payment must be made.

"Things go on most blessedly in London, and a little is doing in different places in the

* Rev. Thomas Pentycross, late vicar of St. Mary, Wallingford.

country; but I long to see that blessed prayer a thousand times more answered,

"Thy kingdom come."

"My dear friend, let us labour much to promote it: in blessing, God will bless us; and in multiplying we shall be multiplied.

"Your ever affectionate brother,

"R. HILL."

"Rev. D. Simpson,
"Macclesfield, Cheshire."*

The following letters, addressed to Mr. Bull, shew the anxiety of the pastor efficiently to supply the pulpit,—and contain some characteristic remarks,—

"My dear Brother,

"I hear with much satisfaction that you are to be in London (D. V.) the latter end of next week. I am sure the people of Surrey Chapel love you, and I believe you love them; and they will much want your services, next Lord's day se'nnight in the morning. As I heard you were to be with Mrs. Wilberforce, I have been and asked her if I may ask you; and as she has

* Life of Simpson by Dr. Williams, p. 38.

given her entire approbation to borrow her guest. I have permitted myself to be published for a charity sermon, under a strong persuasion that you are appointed in Providence to fill my place at Surrey Chapel. I therefore write you a line, that you may make for yourself no other engagement than what is made for you already. I hear you are to be at Clapham in the evening, and this will be all in your way,—be so kind as to send me an immediate answer, that I may know what I have to depend upon. N. B. Keep in mind our Tuesday evening lecture, and our little snug meeting on Friday morning, which are generally so comfortable to me, that I scarcely ever resign my place to any minister unless I love him as well as myself; you, however, shall preach as often as you please. I have other things to talk to you about; there is next to a famine of the word in Gloucestershire. O that Newport Pagnel might provide them with a supply. I shall hope to see you on Saturday week at Mr. Wilberforce's, but am not certain. Your very affectionate Brother,

"R. HILL."

"Surrey Chapel,
"Saturday Evening."

"To Rev. Mr, Bull, Newport Pagnel, Bucks."

"My dear Sir,

"The last time you favoured me with your assistance at the Surrey Chapel, you gave me some encouragement to expect from you further help about Christmas: charity to an infant cause, and compassion to one that wants your help, bids you attend the call. I trust the Lord will incline your heart to come, nothing doubting but it is his will that you should come. I write to you thus early that I may have timely notice when you can favour us with a visit, and how long that visit is to last: short visits from some people, I confess I like better than long ones,—but from you I not only can say, in regard to myself, but for many others, the longer your visit is made, the more thankfully will it be acknowledged. Last night I was with Mr. Thomas Wilson, and other gentlemen, whose hearts and hands are engaged in the present undertaking,—who all unanimously join with me in the above request: it is somewhat pleasant now and then to graze in a fresh pasture, especially where people seem hungering for the word, such I trust you will find the congregation in this place; the Lord constrain you

to come and see, to come soon, and to stay long,

"So prays your affectionate, though unworthy brother, "R. HILL."

"St. George's Road,
"Nov. 11, 1783."

"Rev. Mr. Bull, Newport Pagnel, Bucks."

A few years after the opening of the chapel, a variety of improvements were considered necessary, which appear to have engaged the anxious attention of Mr. Hill; to these and other points he refers in the following letters,—

"London, Sept. 10, 1790."

"My dear Brother Bull,

"My last letter you did not answer; the engagements of the great are great. I hope, however, you will answer this, and answer it according to my liking. Surrey Chapel is now under repair,—the congregation have been turned adrift for two Sabbaths already, and I fear will be for two more. I only now ask the favour of your assistance to preach one end of the day a charity sermon for us, not

the first, but the second Sabbath after it is opened, and at least to stop one Sunday after that. Modesty says, ask but little of the great, and they will grant the more; now, I have some very peculiar distant calls to attend to through the month of October, and I cannot dare to leave the chapel without a minister that the congregation highly approve: they love your ministry exceedingly; if ever Jesus blessed you in your life, he has blessed you at Surrey Chapel. May you come and be blessed again.

"In much haste, your's affectionately,

"R. HILL."

"Rev. Mr. Bull, Newport
"Pagnel, Bucks."

"My dear Brother Bull,

"As grey as a badger the chapel shall be before it is decorated again, with my consent; but the people called for it, and indeed not before the place needed it; besides this, my attendance on the business has made me feel so very worldly, that I scarce know where I am, or what I am; I have, however, just sufficient sense left me to recollect that you say you cannot come on the first Sabbath I mentioned in

my last,—but proffered your assistance for a morning sermon on the second Sabbath in October. Mr. Neale promises to see that you shall be properly fetched and carried for your services; but if I may mend your plan, I would say, come to London on the Thursday—preach at Surrey Chapel on the Friday morning—stop and visit your London friends on the Saturday —and go to Clapham on the Sabbath after the morning service with us. You say you cannot stop longer than one Sabbath. I am afraid, however, that the declining state of our dear old friend, Mr. Thornton's, health, may make you alter your purpose; if so, however sorry for the cause, we shall be happy to avail ourselves of your services. You did not mention if you had any of your students disengaged; I have had people here this day from Kingston, to inquire about your answer; I hope your honour will think of an answer when you write again. I want these poor little matters to be over, that I may be enabled to say, "Return again unto thy rest, O my soul." Jesus is my rest, he himself is the peace of God, and through him the peace of God that passeth all understanding, and which keeps our hearts.

"Love to you and yours, from yours sincerely, for Christ's sake,

"R. HILL."

"Wednesday Noon,
"Sept. 22, 1790."

"Rev. W. Bull, Newport
"Pagnel, Bucks."

"My dear Friend,

"You ran away in such a hurry last Sunday morning from Surrey Chapel, that you forgot to leave word when you would come again, as you told me; so I told the people that they might expect some of your help during your vacation. Tell me what I am to say to the people, when they are perpetually asking, 'When are we to have Mr. Bull again?' Many were disappointed last Sabbath morning, not having received previous notice of your visit. I ask all these favours in submission to Mr. Thornton, as you are at present his guest. You said somewhat about being in town this evening,—if so, can you preach the lecture here, and take a bed at our house? If you would do this, we would send you down in the carriage to-morrow morning to Mr. Wilberforce's, as I suppose you are next bound to that

place. Whenever you come, I pray that a gracious God may come with you, otherwise your namesakes in the fields will make as profitable a noise as yourself.

"Your ever affectionate Brother,

"R. HILL."

"Surrey Chapel, Tuesday Morn."

"Respects to Mr. Thornton.

"Rev. Mr. Bull,
at John Thornton's, Esq."

"After the settlement of Mr. Hill at Surrey Chapel, he generally resided in London from November until the close of May, when he retired for a season to his beautiful residence at Wotton-under-edge, or commenced his much-loved itinerating labours. During his absence from London his pulpit was supplied by ministers of different denominations, all holding the essential doctrines of the Gospel. The venerable Berridge, Pentycross, Glasscott, Venn, and Scott, the excellent commentator on the Scriptures, preached faithfully the truth as it is in Jesus, at Surrey Chapel. It is due to Mr. Scott's memory to state, that before his death his mind changed as to the propriety of clergy-

men engaging in these irregular services. "Gradually," he remarks, "I became sensible of the inconveniency and impropriety of attempting to unite things in themselves discordant, and more attached to the established church; so that after I had been a few years in London, I refused to preach irregularly, except once in the year, I consented to exchange pulpits with Mr. Hill, at Surrey Chapel, that being the stipulated condition of his preaching a charity sermon for the Lock Hospital: and when I took my present living, I immediately refused to do this also, and determined no more to deviate from regularity.

"I do not say this," adds Mr. Scott, "as blaming those who once belonged to the Establishment, but have since been induced to labour in a different part of the vineyard; but merely as accounting for my own conduct; and as bearing my decided testimony against the practice, at present not common, of holding a living, and yet preaching irregularly. As to those who have neither livings, lectureships, nor curacies, and who preach at one time in a licensed meeting-house, or elsewhere, and in a church at another time; I would do the same,

were I a dissenting minister, if I were permitted to do it. The *veto* belongs to the Bishop, not the *volo* to the preacher.*

In May, 1790, Mr. Venn preached for a few Sundays at Surrey Chapel, and this was his last engagement with the people. In the prospect of these services he wrote, April 9, 1790,—"Next week I go to town on that arduous and glorious business, of preaching the name of Jesus to thousands of immortal souls! Oh, Who is sufficient for these things?"

On the 13th of June, 1790, he took his final leave of the congregation, addressing a great multitude from Heb. x. 23, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering: for He is faithful that promised." After this service he remarked, "My work is nearly ended: for my mental faculties are very dull; and my bodily strength greatly reduced."†

In the following letter Mr. Hill states the ground of Mr. Venn's declining further to supply the pulpit at Surrey Chapel, where his labours had been remarkably useful:—

* Life of Scott, p. 169.

† Life of Rev. H. Venn, A.M. p. 485.

"London, March 15, 1791.

"My dear Brother Bull,

"Since Mr. Venn positively refuses to make any further attempts to serve us at Surrey Chapel, through his declining state of health, I cannot drop my applications to you for your assistance; your mind seems fixed for Brighthelmstone for the autumn. I shall be happy if ever you are prevailed upon to divide the time, —but if that is not for the present to be expected, I must request you not to put a negative on my application for a short visit immediately after Easter,—this, you think, will be the most convenient time for you: now, if you can be here the first Sabbath after Easter, and stay over that, and two more, you would be but a little more than a fortnight from home: if you could double the time, it would give me double satisfaction; but if that should be too long, you cannot deny us so small a favour as two Sabbaths, and then you will only be one week from home; now, you are only to send word whether you can stay a week, a month, or six months. I am sure I write the voice of the people, and what I believe will be to their spiritual good, and I look up to the Lord to send a favourable answer; may his constraint be

upon you, and his blessing with you whenever you come. Blessed be God, we are not without some evidences of the Divine presence,—only at times the poor preacher is ready to sink into the earth under the wretched poverty of his performances; still the Lord seems to cover all; all that know I write to you, send love, in which they are most heartily joined by theirs and yours,

"For Christ's sake,

"R. Hill."

"Love to Mrs. Bull and your son.—Send an answer speedily."

"Rev. Mr. Bull,
Newport Pagnel, Bucks."

In addition to the clergymen whose names have been mentioned, Messrs. Joss, Mills, Piercy, Medley, as well as Mr. Bull, from among the nonconformists, once preached the tidings of great joy in Surrey Chapel. Since their removal "to the rest which remaineth to the people of God," the congregation has enjoyed the valued labours of many of the most talented ministers of the day. For nearly fifty years the Rev. William Jay, of Bath, has paid his annual visit to the congregation, and his services are

as acceptable, now "the almond-tree flourishes," as when "the dew of youth" was upon him. He has confirmed many in the faith, and led many thoughtless prodigals to the Saviour of sinners. The excellent Mr. Bull preached occasionally until the close of his ministry; and his simple and conversational style secured the attention of the congregation. Like the esteemed pastor, he was fond of relating striking anecdotes, and through them he frequently riveted the most important instruction on the mind. When preaching at Surrey Chapel, in 1793, he mentioned that when Mr. Whitefield was once preaching for Mr. Grimshaw, in Yorkshire, he took occasion to say in his discourse, that "he was willing to hope, in the judgment of charity, that most of his hearers were good people, — converted persons, and truly possessed of the grace of God." Upon which the venerable Grimshaw, who was present, rose up, and with an elevated voice said, "No, no, sir, they are not half of them converted by the grace of God. Speak to them faithfully." "So let me be faithful to you," said Mr. Bull, "not mince the matter, and say, 'Peace, peace, where there is no peace."

The Rev. John Sibree, of Frome, was for many years one of the acceptable supplies at the chapel, and was highly esteemed by the pastor. He was eminently calculated "to build up the household of faith," and to comfort "the mourners in Zion." The aged people heard him gladly, and his labours were not in vain in the Lord. "With a voice exceedingly melodious, and which he well knew how to modulate, he delivered his sermons with that energy, and resigned himself to those strong impulses of feeling, which constitute the very essence of effective oratory. Hence they are adapted to strike the conscience and impress the heart."*

His appeals to the thoughtless sinner were often powerful and impressive. One Sabbath evening a youth, "halting between two opinions," who had been led to Surrey Chapel by a beloved mother, resolved no longer to attend where the guilty conscience could not find repose. He wandered from the place, intending to pass the evening in pleasurable pursuits, but, after walking for a considerable time, he found he was involuntarily and unintentionally

* Murch's Funeral Sermon.

advancing towards the chapel. The sound of the music was heard, and conscience would not let him pass by. He went into the free part of the chapel, and took his seat close to the door, resolving in a few minutes to make his exit. The hymn being finished, Mr. Sibree gave out his text. At that moment the thought passed through the mind of the prodigal, "I would rather hear the benediction than the text." Mr. Sibree paused after announcing his subject, and looking towards the crowd at the doors, he exclaimed with deep feeling, "Ah! I am afraid there are some thoughtless sinners present, who would sooner hear the preacher pronounce "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,"—than his text. The words powerfully impressed the mind of the undecided youth, and he remained till the close of the service. He has since been united with the church for more than twenty years.

Equally interesting information might be given of the successful labours of Mr. Griffin of Portsea, Mr. Slatterie of Chatham, and Mr. Elliott of Devizes. The latter minister was himself led to the Saviour by the truth he heard at Surrey Chapel, and was trained up for the work of the ministry at the feet of the

venerable Mr. Bull, whose name has been mentioned. The annual sermons to young people, which Mr. Elliott has been accustomed to preach during his visits, have been the happy means of leading several youthful sinners to seek for the blessings of the Gospel. The limits of this memoir will not permit the writer to pay a proper tribute of grateful respect to Mr. James, of Birmingham, and many others who have ministered unto the people the words of eternal life.

Mr. Hill maintained an affectionate intercourse with his fellow-labourers in the Lord, who kindly ministered to his London congregation. He would sometimes address them with the freedom of one who sincerely loved them, particularly if there had been a momentary misunderstanding upon any point. This will be seen in the following singular letter which he wrote to a minister whom he greatly esteemed:—

"London, March 26, 1791.

"My dear Brother,

"I should serve you just right if I were to answer your letter in a style as crusty as your own; but as you appear to be a perfect master

in this way of writing, I shall only expose my ignorance were I to make the attempt. Though we have been always happy to avail ourselves of your assistance in all your occasional visits, you have never yet favoured us with a direct visit on purpose to serve us. Your next visit will be of that description; and I dare say you will have no occasion to grumble at the meanness of our friends: we always supposed that your son would come with you, and you may make this house your home as long as you like it; only leave your crusty spirit behind you—I am sure it will not help you in preaching Jesus; as he is love, he is best preached under the spirit of love; oh for more of his love, that I may preach better about it.

"Accept hearty love to your crusty reverence, from yours sincerely,

"R. HILL."

The attendance at the chapel has been large and respectable ever since its opening; but the numbers it will hold have been overrated. The chapel, which is in the form of an octagon, is well adapted for hearing, and the preacher has a full command of his congregation. It is cal-

culated that two thousand five hundred persons can be conveniently accommodated with sittings, though on special occasions more than three thousand have been seen there attentively listening to the great truths of the gospel.

Within this sacred edifice many eminent persons have worshipped God; among whom may be mentioned, the late Duke of Kent, the good Dean Milner, Sir Richard Hill, the patriotic and benevolent Wilberforce, the worthy Ambrose Serle, who here united their prayers and praises with the leading clergymen of the day; and with many of "the elect ladies," who were zealously devoted to the cause of God. Here "the ministering spirits sent forth to minister unto the heirs of salvation," have frequently seen the tear of repentance drop from the eye of the prodigal, and have borne the intelligence to heaven, where it has produced "joy in the presence of the angels of God." In this place the devoted Rowland Hill successfully laboured. He fed his people with knowledge and with understanding. Through his instrumentality many were added to the church, who will be his "glory and joy in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at his coming."

In a future chapter an account will be given of the societies which have been established in Surrey chapel, and of some of the blessed results which have followed the ministry of the word. The pastor has been removed, but the language of his surviving and united people is, "Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For our brethren and companions' sake, we will now say, Peace be within thee."

CHAP. IV.

THE LABOURS OF MR. HILL AS AN ITINERANT.

THE REFORMERS—REVOLUTION OF 1688—STATE OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH DESCRIBED BY DR. GILLIES AND MIDDLETON—WESLEY AND WHITEFIELD—MR. JAY'S REMARK ON THE REVIVALISTS OF RELIGION—ITINERANT LABOURS OF MR. HILL, AND THE SUFFERINGS HE ENDURED—HAMPSTEAD HEATH AND CROYDON—HIS GREAT ATTACHMENT TO FIELD-PREACHING, AND REMARKS THEREON—THE SERPENT—DEVIZES, INTERESTING CONVERSION—PREACHING AT KINGSWOOD—ANECDOTE OF SIR RICHARD HILL—LETTER FROM REV. JOHN BERRIDGE—SINGULAR SCENE AT WREXHAM—HIS SUCCESSFUL LABOURS IN WALES—OPPOSITION AT ABBERGELLE—KINGSWOOD GRAVE-YARD—FIRST TOUR IN SCOTLAND—IMPRESSIONS ON THE SOBER MINDS OF THE SCOTCH PEOPLE—PAISLEY AND CHRISTIAN LOVE—MR. HILL ADDRESSES FIFTEEN THOUSAND PERSONS ON THE CALTON HILL, EDINBURGH—THE GREAT GOOD WHICH RESULTED FROM THE TOUR—THE BAPTISTS OF NORTHAMPTON—SECOND TOUR IN SCOTLAND—MR. HILL'S SERIOUS CONTENTIONS WITH THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, AND THE GENERAL ASSOCIATE SYNOD—REPLY TO DR. JAMIESON'S PAMPHLET—THE BIGOT OF LIBERALITY—THIRD VISIT TO SCOTLAND—DR. CHALMERS AT SURREY CHAPEL—TOURS IN IRELAND—THE SWEARING CAPTAIN—MINISTERS NOT TO BE CONFINED TO GEOGRAPHICAL LIMITS—THE HONOURABLE B. NOEL'S LETTER TO THE BISHOP OF LONDON—REV. THOMAS SCOTT'S REMARKS ON ITINERANT PREACHING.

THE great Head of the Church has raised up, in every age, suitable instruments to make known the glad tidings of the Gospel to perishing men. The fathers of the church handed

down to their successors the great truths which the apostles had preached. After the errors of Rome had been extensively spread, Wickliff appeared as a light shining in a benighted world. "His preaching, at which all the succeeding reformers lighted their tapers, was to his countrymen a short blaze, soon damped and stifled by the pope and prelates."* The reformation in Germany, and the adjacent countries, was advanced by Luther, Melancthon, Zuinglius, Calvin, and Beza; whilst in England, Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley, and in Scotland, Knox and Melville appeared as the great champions of the truth.† The cause of Christ advanced, through many difficulties, until the Revolution of 1688, when King William landed in our happy land. He sustained the national church, but gave liberty of conscience to all who dissented from it.

* Milton's Prose Works, by Fletcher, p. 2.

† The wisdom and power of God were very manifest in raising up and qualifying such instruments for his work. They received peculiar endowments for a peculiar service, and their very infirmities and defects were subordinated to the service of God. Such men as Luther appear not now, nor are they necessary: when they are, God will raise them up.——*Mann's Ecclesiastical Lectures*, p. 231.

A state of peace is not always a season of prosperity to the church of Christ. She has flourished most in troublous times. After the Revolution of 1688, all denominations appear to have been in a lukewarm condition. Like the virgins in the parable, "they all slumbered and slept."

"Awful and gloomy was the period," remarks the biographer of Whitefield, "when Methodism first appeared in these kingdoms. Serious and practical Christianity appeared to be at the lowest ebb; vital religion, so flourishing in the last century, was scarcely known! and the only thing insisted on, was a defence of the outworks of Christianity against the objections of infidels. What was the consequence? The writings of infidels multiplied every day, and infidelity made a rapid progress among persons of every rank, not because they were reasoned into it by the force of argument, but because they were kept strangers to Christ, and the power of his Gospel. We have a most affecting description of this, given by Bishop Butler, in the Preface to his "Analogy," whom none will suspect of exaggerating the fact. "It is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted, that Christianity is not so much a subject of

inquiry; but that it is, now at length, discovered to be fictitious; and accordingly they treat it as if in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment; and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, and as it were by way of reprisals for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world.*

An impartial historian has also said,† "the bishops, in their corporate capacity, were not conspicuous for evangelical purity of sentiment, or attachment to the distinguishing tenets of the Reformation, as expressed in the Articles of the religious community over which they were destined to preside. They drank too much into the spirit of the fashionable theology." "The doctrine of justification by faith alone was in general inadequately and imperfectly stated; the corruption of human nature was spoken of in qualified terms; and salvation was too often represented as the possible attainment of moral exertion, and the legal reward of a religious and virtuous conduct; they viewed

* Dr. Gillies' Life of Whitefield, 2nd edition, p. 4.

† Middelton's Ecclesiastical Memoir of the first four decades of the reign of George the III. p. 10.

what were termed "methodistical tenets," with a sort of instinctive horror, and seemed to lose the power of discriminating between that zeal for the honour of his Saviour, and compassion for perishing sinners, which led the preacher to proclaim with appropriate energy, and in familiar terms, the fulness and freeness of the everlasting Gospel,—and a covert design to court popularity, and ultimately effect the overthrow of the church. With most of the dignitaries of the day, and their ordinary associates, fervour was denominated cant, watchfulness hypocrisy, and abstraction from worldly society unnecessary strictness." Among the higher orders of the clergy, the unction of humility which flowed from the silvered temples of a Beveridge down to the skirts of his garments, and the glow of holy zeal which animated the breast of a Reynolds or a Hopkins, seemed to be exchanged for courtly aspirations after preferment and translation, or distinction in the divinity school of a Lord Lyttelton or a Dr. Johnson."*

* See also the remarks of Middelton on the state of the English Church, in his Biographia Evangelica, vol. iv. p. 510, &c.

"The body of the clergy neither knew, nor cared about, any particular system of religion. In a great number of instances they were negligent and immoral; often grossly so. The population of the large towns were ignorant and profligate; and the inhabitants of villages added to ignorance and profligacy, brutish and barbarous manners."*

Such was the affecting state of religion, and of the times, in Great Britain and Ireland, when the Lord was pleased to cause a glorious revival, in the midst of abounding impiety, through the instrumentality of the despised Methodists. The light began to shine at Oxford, which was the cradle of this new reformation in England. In November, 1729, four young gentlemen of Oxford, Mr. John Wesley, fellow of Lincoln College; Mr. Charles Wesley, student of Christ Church; Mr. Morgan, commoner of Christ Church; and Mr. Kirkman, of Merton College,—began to spend some evenings in a week together, in reading chiefly the Greek Testament. The next year two or three of Mr. John Wesley's pupils desired the liberty of meeting with them; and afterwards one of

* Watson's Life of Wesley, p. 67.

Mr. Charles Wesley's pupils. In 1732, Mr Ingham, of Queen's College, and Mr. Broughton, of Exeter, were added to the number. To these, in April, was joined, Mr. Clayton, of Brazen-nose, with two or three of his pupils. About the same time Mr. James Hervey was permitted to meet with them, and afterwards Mr. Whitefield. These excellent men visited the prisoners in the Oxford goal, and found out the poor and afflicted, and ministered to them spiritual and temporal blessings. Sickness and cowardly desertion, arising from weariness of the cross, reduced the number of this little society of zealous young men; but those who were faithful persevered with unabated diligence in their attempts to do good.* In this way commenced that great work which has resulted in the conversion of many thousands who were perishing for lack of knowledge.

About the same time Watts, Doddridge, and others were instrumental, by their pulpit labours and published works, in restoring the doctrines of the Reformation, and widely spreading them amongst the population of this country.

* Watson's Life of Wesley, pages 16 and 19.

"All these holy men," remarks Mr. Jay, "were a band of heralds, whose hearts the Lord had touched: and they flew like angels, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell upon the earth. They roused a slumbering nation; called their attention to the truth as it is in Jesus; and commenced a revival of evangelical religion, from which churchmen and dissenters have derived advantages, for which they should not be ashamed to be thankful."

For a season Wesley and Whitefield appear to have laboured harmoniously together,—the latter first proclaimed the Gospel in the streets and lanes of the city, and afterwards induced Wesley to adopt the same course. This novel mode of proclaiming the truth excited great opposition.

The conduct of the Methodists was scrupulously hallowed; their spirit gentle, tender, and sympathizing; their courage bold and undaunted; their patience proof against all reproach, hardships, and persecutions; their charities to the poor unbounded, to the full extent of all their resources; their labours wholly gratuitous; and their wonderful activity, and endurance of the fatigues of rapid travelling, seemed to destroy the

distance of place, and to give them a sort of ubiquity in the vast circuit which they had then adopted as the field of their labours. For all these reasons, they "were men to be wondered at," even in the beginning of their career; and as their ardour was increased by the effects which followed, the conversion of great numbers to God, of which the most satisfactory evidence was afforded, they disappointed those who anticipated that their zeal would soon cool, and that, "shorn of their strength by opposition, reproach, and exhausting labours, they would become 'like other men.'"*

Although there was a temporary estrangement between Wesley and Whitefield, on the subject of the Calvinistic doctrine, yet a complete reconciliation took place, when it was considered expedient for them to act independently of each other. So complete was this re-union, that Mr. Whitefield, by his will, gave a mourning ring to his honoured and dear friends, and disinterested fellow-labourers, the Rev. John and Charles Wesley, in token of his indissoluble union with them in heart and christian affection, notwithstanding their dif-

* Watson's Life of Wesley, p. 77.

ference in judgment about some particular points of doctrine. Mr. Wesley, at Mr. Whitefield's own desire, preached his funeral sermon at the Tabernacle, Moorfields.

Whitefield, by his extraordinary labours, exerted a powerful interest in favour of religion in many parts of our country. He became the popular preacher at Moorfields, Kennington Common, and Blackheath, and was greatly esteemed by many of the inhabitants of Scotland and Wales. He may be considered the leader of the despised and successful band of holy and self-denying itinerants, who were emphatically "the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ."

On the death of Whitefield, his standard was borne by Rowland Hill, who faithfully followed in the footsteps of his predecessor, and, as a despised itinerant, made known, through the three kingdoms, the Gospel of the grace of God.

On the 30th September, 1772, he preached a sermon on the anniversary of Whitefield's death, from John v. 35, "He was a burning and a shining light."

At the time Mr. Hill commenced his itinerant labours, he had not only to endure the

cruel persecutions of the world, but also the frowns of the cold orthodox party, who had strong objections to a man being righteous overmuch." His zeal exposed their criminal indolence. Though every where spoken against, he had grace to persevere. Stones, rotten eggs, and other filth, were often thrown at him. All these things he bore patiently, and, in the spirit of his Master, could pray for his vilest persecutors, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

It has been properly remarked upon this subject, "that when he might have entered into the full service of the Church of England, he voluntarily took his rank with a few other pious and evangelical clergymen, and more especially with the immortal Whitefield, by going out of the regular pathways of ecclesiastical service into the wilderness of society, to seek 'the lost sheep,' nobly sacrificing ease, and fame, and honour, and rank, and affluence, to bring these wanderers to the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls."*

* Resolution of the Committee of Village Itinerancy on the death of R. Hill.

Soon after Mr. Hill's first appearance in the metropolis, and before he obtained orders, he became well known as a field preacher. The crowds which pressed to hear him at the Tabernacle and Tottenham-court chapels, were so great, that hundreds could not gain admission. He, therefore, went forth into the open fields; anxious also to meet the wanderers in their own way, he went to Hampstead Heath, and preached to a multitude, who first mocked the doctrines he taught, but many afterwards embraced them.

The second time he preached there, in 1772, it happened to be exceedingly wet, when he chose for his text, Deut. xxxii. 2,—"My doctrine shall drop as the rain." Towards the close of the sermon, the shower being violent, Mr. Hill put on his hat, and thus expressed himself to the people who surrounded him, "Excuse my hat, friends; but do not let the rain alarm us so much: what would the condemned souls in Tophet's parched pit give for a single drop of this consolatory rain, that falleth upon our delightful land, and makes fruitful our long burnt up fields!"

The same summer he preached to multitudes on Kennington Common, the London Fields, at

Brook Green, and also at White Conduit House, and other places of great resort. He had purposed to preach in Smithfield, on the spot where the martyrs suffered in the bloody days of Mary, but was dissuaded by his friends, from the fear of offending the magistrates.

On Thursday, August 13th, in the same year, Mr. Hill drew a number of people to Croydon, where he preached till it was dark, and then gave out that he should speak at Mitcham, it being fair-time; which he did the same evening, from Isaiah li. 1.*

Only a few months before his death, Mr. Hill referred to these labours. "I remember, when I first came to London, I frequently preached at Tottenham-court Chapel, and in the streets and lanes of the city; surprise was on my mind to see the effects produced; oh, it was delightful to see how the people felt under the preaching of the word."

These useful but self-denying labours excited the strong prejudices of the cold orthodox party, and clouded the young preacher's prospects of admission into the church. He refers to the

* Evangelical Biography of Eminent Christians, 1807, Vol. iv. p. 568.

difficulties he experienced on this subject in the following remarks:—

"Having been refused ordination by the Archbishop of York, I esteemed it my duty to go about preaching every where that men should repent; and I believe the message, though attended with abundance of weakness, was still blessed to the salvation of many. I then concluded that it was never the design of Providence that I should be permitted to preach the word of life within the walls of the established church,—though what I never expected I afterwards received."*

Mr. Hill always enjoyed field and itinerant preaching, from a conviction of its great usefulness. "It was always a pleasant circumstance to my mind," was his language, "when the necessity of field-preaching recommended itself. To human nature this was a disgraceful office, and from such a corrupted principle I felt myself much more inclined to caution and timidity than to boldness and zeal."†

These labours were exercised in most parts of England, but particularly in the western

* First Journal of Tour in Scotland, p. 57.

† First Journal, p. 7.

counties. Mr. Hill often referred to Devizes, as the place where he had experienced the greatest opposition.* It was here that the well known tale respecting the serpent, which was said to be thrown *at* him, had its origin. This report arose from the following circumstance: a wicked fellow cast a snake into the crowd, to alarm the females, and interrupt the worship. Mr. Hill immediately took it up, knowing that it was quite harmless; thus convincing his hearers that their fears were groundless. He then placed it beneath his foot, and made a profitable use of the circumstance for the instruction of his hearers. It is worthy of record, that, many years after Mr. Hill had preached in the market-place of Devizes, he was the means of leading a young man to Christ, who became a minister of the Gospel, and who for more than thirty years has successfully proclaimed the

* At this town the Rev. John Wesley suffered severely, and had a narrow escape from death. He states in his journal: "The Devizes mob had this peculiarity, that it was led on not only by the curate, but by two dissenters: thus Herod and Pilate were made friends." Such facts shew the wretched state of the country at that time.—*Watson's Life of Wesley*, p. 136; see also p. 142, 143.

riches of the Saviour's grace in this very town How wonderful are the ways of God!

It was during one of his visits to Bristol, where his labours had been most useful, that Mr. Hill was actively engaged in preaching in the streets of the city. This course of labour of the devoted itinerant appears to have excited the displeasure of his father, who sent his brother Richard to Bristol to admonish him. On reaching the city, he found that Rowland was to preach at Kingswood to the colliers, and proceeded to the place. There he heard Rowland most affectionately talking to the multitude about the Saviour's love, and witnessed the tears of penitence flowing down their cheeks. The preacher observing Richard in the crowd, told the people that he had no doubt his brother, Richard Hill, esq. would speak to them on the following day, upon the great truths of the Gospel. Richard was taken by surprise. His Christian feelings overcame all other considerations, and at the appointed time he preached that Redeemer, who humbled himself that he might gloriously exalt his people. This is the correct account of the tale, the scene of which has been frequently, though inaccurately, laid at Marchamley, a

beautiful village adjoining the park at Hawkstone.

After this interesting scene had passed away, Mr. Richard Hill appears to have regretted the occurrence. This feeling is referred to in a letter from good John Berridge, the vicar of Everton, to his friend John Newton, dated October 18, 1771, which contains a striking description of the nature of pride.

"Mr. Hill, who went to Bristol to chide his brother, and fell a prophesying, has, since his return to London, sent a very severe letter to poor Rowland. Oh! what is man! But, how easily we spy the vanity and inconsistency of the creature in another, and how hardly we discover it in ourselves. The foulest stain and highest absurdity in our nature is pride, and yet this base hedgehog so rolls himself up in his bristly coat, that we can seldom get a sight of his claws. It is the root of unbelief. Men 'cannot submit to the righteousness of Christ.' It cleaves like a pitched shirt to the skin; or, like leprosy to the wall. No sharp culture of plowing and harrowing will clear the ground of it. The foul tweech will be sure to spring up with the next kindly rain. This diabolical sin has brought more scourges upon my back,

than every thing else; and it is of so insinuating a nature, that I know not how to part with it. I hate it, and love it. I quarrel with it, and embrace it. I dread it, and yet suffer it to lie in my bosom. It pleads a right, through the fall, to be tenant for life; and has such a wonderful appetite, that it can feed kindly, both on grace and garbage; will be as warm and snug in a cloister, as in a palace; and be as much delighted with a fine prayer, as a foul oath. But whither am I running? Why, running into pride, whilst I am abusing it. Lord, save me! If it must dwell within me, let it not be a lordly master, but a loathed domestic; if it will follow me here like my shadow, oh, let it not entail a curse upon me. Oh! that I could once say unto thee,—foul pride, farewell for ever."*

Some years since, an aged lady called on Mr. Hill, and in the course of conversation inquired, "Do you remember preaching at Wrexham, Sir, about fifty years ago, in a field not far from Peny-Bryn? Oh, yes; I remember the time very well. Both the parties smiled, when the lady remarked, "I see you

* Original MS. Letter.

remember the pig, Sir! Indeed I do,—and never shall forget it. After the aged couple had enjoyed a hearty laugh at the recollections of the past, the lady said, "I was then very young, and was led by curiosity to hear you preach, and I hope the word then came with power to my soul." Mr. Hill afterwards described the scene which had impressed the service on his mind. Near the spot where he preached there was a tenter-field, on which a fine kind of thread, or yarn, was exposed to the air. Several women, who were taking care of it, observing a number of persons assembling together, were tempted to quit their employ for a short season. The gate of the field was left open, and several large pigs walked in. In a few moments the intruders got the iron which is pierced through their snouts entangled in the twine; and the more they shook, the more they found themselves imprisoned. The loud cries of the pigs alarmed the women, who soon found out the mischief which had been done. They ran to the spot, and a general pursuit took place. Mr. Hill, while preaching, observed several of the women falling upon the poor animals, turning them on their backs, and then endeavouring to

disentangle their heads from the twine: this trifling event produced considerable amusement, and for a time interfered with the service.

The Rev. Thomas Jackson, who frequently travelled with Mr. Hill, states that his labours in the Principality, particularly in the south, were remarkably blessed. So deep was the impression left upon the minds of the warm-hearted Welsh, by his preaching, that when he visited Haverford-west, after an absence of forty years, the people rang the church bells for joy that he was again permitted to visit them. He found several of the seals of his ministry still in the world.

At some places, during his tours through the Principality, he met with opposition from men opposed to evangelical truth. At Abergeley he determined to preach in the open air, and many people assembled to listen to his discourse. A messenger was despatched to the vicar, who soon made his appearance, and endeavoured to prevent the continuance of the service. A most singular conversation took place, during which the worthy itinerant offered to make way for the resident minister, and promised attentively to listen to his discourse.

The vicar found opposition useless. He was evidently impressed by Mr. Hill's gentlemanly and dignified conduct, and retired, leaving him in possession of the field.

In most of the places Mr. Hill visited, he was attended by a numerous audience, and "much people were added to the Lord." One Sabbath afternoon, a few years before his death, he preached at the chapel at Kingswood, on its re-opening after repairs and enlargement. The place not being large enough for the people, he proposed to preach in the burial-ground; the managers complied with the suggestion, though it was the cause of very considerable inconvenience to the congregation. Mr. Hill ascended a tomb-stone, and preached a most animated discourse. The writer saw the good man after the service. He was exhausted, but rejoiced that he had had "a little bit of open-air preaching!" He then mentioned that he believed that such services had been the means of leading more sinners to God, than any of the sermons he had preached in churches or chapels.

Like the excellent John Wesley, Mr. Hill extended his tours to Cornwall, and was kindly received. There is one spot, near Redruth,

called the Pit, which is an inverted amphitheatre, formed by the falling in of a mine The preacher stands on one side of the Pit, about half-way down, so that he has the congregation below and above him. A great multitude can, therefore, distinctly hear the sermon. At this hallowed spot, Wesley and Nelson preached, when no one could be found to show them hospitality; "they slept on the ground for want of a lodging,—and picked blackberries to satisfy their hunger."* Here also Mr. Hill proclaimed the undying love of the Saviour to listening thousands; the prayer of faith has frequently ascended to God from this hallowed spot, and many abandoned sinners have been "called out of darkness into marvellous light." Not far from this Pit, which has been so frequently sanctified by the word of God and prayer, is the celebrated mountain Carn-brae, on which human sacrifices were once presented to "the unknown God;" and where the antiquary still looks with interest on the remains of druidical worship.

These itinerant labours were extended to

* Watson's Life of Wesley, p. 124.

Scotland. At the close of the last century it was the custom for popular English ministers to spend a few weeks in the year in visiting the neighbouring country, or the destitute parts of their own. They did not collect for any particular charity, but went as evangelists, to stir up the people to the great concerns of religion, and by this plan many sinners were called to the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Mr. Hill's first memorable tour in Scotland, was commenced on the 15th of July, 1798. He was invited by James Haldane, esq., to travel through the country, and preach to the people wherever he could find access to them. In an account of this tour,—he calls his lay friend "his much respected brother and fellow-labourer in the Gospel of God our Saviour." He tells him "You were educated for the maritime life, and, from a situation creditable and lucrative, commenced a *peddling* preacher, crying your wares from town to town at a low rate indeed, 'without money and without price.'"

At this time Mr. Hill describes himself as "*an old stager* in the itinerant work;" and adds, "In preaching through England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, I always conceived that I *stuck*

close to my parish. We are to "preach the Gospel to every creature, even to the end of the world."*

Mr. Hill visited Worcester, Kidderminster, Wolverhampton, and Hanley, in his way to the north; the dissenting ministers in these towns having kindly opened their pulpits to him. At Macclesfield he occupied the pulpit of his beloved college companion, David Simpson. Mr. Hill says, "My very affectionate old friend was anxious that I should preach to the people of his charge; though it was not the regular evening for the lecture. His large church presented a very serious and crowded congregation, to whom I attempted to explain the mind that was in Christ Jesus, and its consequent effects on the Christian, from Phil. ii. 5."†

At Manchester he preached for Mr. Smythe, minister of St. Clement's Church, and then proceeded by Garstang, Lancaster, Kendal, Carlisle, to Edinburgh, where he arrived on the 28th of July, and was received at the hospitable abode of Mr. James Haldane.

* First Journal, p. 69—69.

† First Journal, p. 3, 5.

On Lord's day, the 29th, Mr. Hill preached his first sermon, at the Circus, in the northern metropolis. He selected for his text a favourite passage,—"If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." In the evening he addressed a good congregation, from 1 Cor. i. 22, "For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom," &c. On this subject he remarks,—"How very different is the immediate and direct simplicity of the apostle, compared to too many of the cold formal productions of the present day! Oh, the simplicity that is in Christ! How lovely in its effects, while the minister preaches just as he feels, wisely regulated by the word of God, and warmly animated with a desire to bring salvation to the sinner's heart.*

A friend who heard Mr. Hill, on his first visit to Scotland, has informed the writer that he had but small congregations at the commencement of his labours, but after a few weeks he heard him address twenty thousand people on the Calton Hill. The impression produced, by his manner, on the minds of the worthy Scotch people was exceedingly singular.

* First Journal, p. 15.

"On entering the pulpit, he knelt to pray." "He's a Roman Catholic," said one. He concluded his public supplications with the Lord's prayer. Oh, I ken he's of the English kirk," said another. He began to preach, "I understand," said he, "you are fond of lectures in Scotland, and so I shall adopt your favourite plan." He soon told rather an amusing anecdote, and at the end of it exclaimed, "But I've forgotten my lecture," which produced a general impression that the poor gentleman was a little cracked. These feelings, however, soon passed away, and his lively and animated style, and his pungent and eloquent appeals to the conscience, led many to cry, "What shall we do to be saved?" A respectable Scotch minister, now living, has stated that he never heard an anecdote from a pulpit, in his native land, until Mr. Hill began his itinerant labours there.

At Leith he preached in a timber-yard to two thousand people. On the 3rd of August, "four thousand persons heard him on the Calton Hill." On another occasion "he endeavoured at the same place to illustrate and enforce the love of God to man, from the parable of the prodigal son, when it was sup-

posed that a congregation of nine or ten thousand people were present. After these labours, our devoted friend, accompanied by Mr. Haldane, visited Stirling and Dumblane, "where he saw the seat of action of that best of men, Archbishop Leighton, who was every thing that was wise, just, and good." He then went to Crieff, Dunkeld, Perth, Kinross, and returned back to Edinburgh on Lord's day, the 12th of August. He afterwards visited Glasgow, where he preached in "the high church;" then he proceeded to Anderton, Paisley, Greenock, Dumbarton, and returned again to Edinburgh.

At Paisley he appears to have met with men of kindred spirit with himself. He preached "in the lower church-yard," the scene of the late Dr. Witherspoon's labours. He says, "I passed the evening at the house of the truly affectionate son of that truly apostolic man, the late Dr. Gillies, the author of the "Memoirs of Mr. Whitefield's Life." His house was filled with good ministers of different denominations, all living in affectionate love and cordiality with each other. This makes Paisley the paradise of Scotland. Indeed, hell would be a paradise if love were there, and an earthly

paradise is little better than hell, if love be absent. My soul loves Paisley; for there, I believe, Christians love each other. May the precious leaven that is amidst them, spread itself through the north! I grieve to find so many separated by human laws on earth, who are all to be united in one by Divine love in heaven and glory."

On the 19th of August he again preached on the Calton Hill. He says, "I addressed the most solemn congregation I have seen for many years. Fifteen thousand, on the most moderate computation, were said to attend; some suppose a larger multitude."

On leaving Edinburgh, Mr. Hill visited Dundee, St. Andrews, and Kirkcaldy. At the latter place the reverend preacher was severely reprimanded by an aged gentleman, one of the elders of the church, for omitting the second psalm. His apology was, that he had to cross the water, and had not time to wait, and that he thought two psalms no more necessary than two sermons; and that things of this sort were left optional, as time and opportunity allowed.*

* First Journal, p. 44.

Mr. Hill continued at Edinburgh till the 20th of Sept. when he preached there for the last time during this journey. The Calton Hill was the hallowed spot where, from Acts xx. 24, "But none of these things move me," &c. he appealed to nearly twenty thousand people. In reference to this immense congregation he remarks, "To be clear from the blood of such a multitude, and to declare to them the whole counsel of God, what wisdom and grace does it require!"

On leaving Edinburgh, he proceeded to Dunbar and Berwick. From these towns he went to Alnwick, Newcastle, and Durham, through Yorkshire, and reached his beloved retreat at Wotton-under-edge, at the close of September. He then records in his journal, "I have now finished a nine weeks' Gospel tour of full twelve hundred miles; have preached in much weakness to many thousands."

This visit to Scotland was a pentecostal season. The preacher's great subject was "repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." The most powerful impressions were produced on the multitudes who flocked to his ministry. An old friend, who

heard many of the sermons, has frequently remarked, "Whenever I listened to him, eternity appeared to be next door to me;" and this was the case with many others. His little anecdotes produced a wonderful effect on a people who had always been accustomed to dry, logical discourses. During this tour it was known that several hundred souls were added to the church of Christ.

Encouraged by the Divine blessing that attended his first labours in Scotland, Mr. Hill cheerfully consented to make another tour, which he commenced on the 16th of May, 1799. He visited many of the churches, and addressed large congregations as he passed through the midland and northern counties. At Northampton, he preached for Mr. Ryland, "on a communion occasion." He remarks, "I was happy to be admitted to partake among them. Believers being all one in our common Lord, why should not their privileges be common among all the members of the same family? Though I should suppose, by far the majority of that congregation are Baptists, yet I hope they will remember that they have ever had warm friends from liberal-minded people at large, and that now it would

be the greater act of cruelty to exclude those from communion who differ from them as it respects the ordinance of baptism, since in that town the like comfortable communion may not be so easily obtained. May they, therefore, maintain their liberality inviolable. This sort of spiritual mixture makes the best Christian communions. The children of God then find their communion with each other, not on account of their empty dry forms and orders, but because they feel themselves all one in Christ."*

On the 7th of June, our itinerant again reached Edinburgh. He found the pious people in the city quite *thunder-struck* at the fulminating bull just uttered against them from the General Assembly, which had expelled Mr. Greville Ewing, and others, from their body. This circumstance had a most unhappy influence on the preacher's mind. For a season he appears to have forgotten the example of the apostle, "I determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified."

The General Assembly, in their decree, signed by Dr. Moodie, as Moderator, refer to

* Tour through the Highlands, p. 3.

the pious itinerants as "a set of men, whose proceedings threaten no small disorder in the country. They complain of the establishment of Sunday-schools, and of the bringing together assemblies of people in the fields, or in places not intended for public worship." They object to the preaching of persons, without those advantages of regular education and preparatory knowledge, which, under every form of a Christian church, since the age of miraculous gifts, have been held as indispensably necessary for the useful and successful discharge of a Gospel ministry. This famous bull, after suggesting that "those who openly profess their enmity to our ecclesiastical establishment, are no friends to our civil constitution," calls upon the sons of the church to walk in the old paths traversed by their fathers.

This address was ordered to be read against the itinerant brethren, in all the parish churches of Scotland. At the same time there appeared "An Act of the General Associate Synod," dated the 8th of May, 1799; the following extract from which will, doubtless, interest the reader:—

"The Synod finding, from papers before them, that in sundry places various abuses

prevail, among persons of our communion, by *promiscuous hearing*, not only of ministers belonging to churches from which we are in a a state of separation, but likewise of *lay preachers;* by our people attending public meetings, where private persons encroach upon the business of the ministerial office,—and by the manifest abuse of Sabbath-evening schools, the Synod agree in renewing their act of the 2nd of May, 1798, with the following corrections and amendments:—

"The Synod, therefore, agree in declaring, that as *lay preaching* (or preaching by persons not invested with any ecclesiastical office,) has no warrant in the word of God; no person in the communion of the Secession church ought to countenance the public ministrations of such persons: and as this Synod have always considered it as their duty to testify against *promiscuous communion*, no person under their inspection can, consistently with their principles, attend upon, or give countenance to, the public ministration of those who bear office in *any* church against which we have lifted up a testimony in a state of separation from her."

The act then condemns the Sabbath-evening schools, if in them "discourses are delivered

tending to encroach upon the work of the ministry, if there is such an attendance of multitudes as to give the school the appearance of an assembly met for public worship."*

These illiberal proceedings created a great sensation among many devoted persons, and unhappily much excited Mr. Hill's mind against both the religious bodies whence they proceeded. His spirit was deeply wounded, and in every sermon he displayed considerable ingenuity in holding up these venerable bodies to the public contempt. He was completely led from his great work, and appears to have preached more against the Established and Secession churches, than against the kingdom of Satan. A friend, who was present, says of him, "In every sermon he fired red-hot shots against the General Assembly and the General Associate Synod. It was astonishing how he varied his mode of attack on every occasion."

During this tour, Mr. Hill, in almost every sermon, urged the building of a new place of worship, on the plan of Surrey Chapel. "What should be its glory?" he inquired. "Let it

* Plea for Union, p. 2, 3.

embrace all who love the Lord Jesus, and be the centre of union among them who are now disunited; let it then be called *the Union Church;* and let her prove that she deserves the name. Let her pulpit be open to all ministers who preach and love the Gospel, and her communion equally open to all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity."* Our excellent friend did not find his sober Scotch brethren very willing to adopt his plan, and this led him to make severe remarks on their bigoted attachment to their own systems.

It is stated in Mr. Hill's journal, that he again preached on his favourite Calton Hill, to ten thousand people. He then proceeded to Stirling, Kinross, Dundee, Aberbrothick, Montrose, Brechin, Aberdeen, Meldrum, and Greystone. At the latter place he met with the excellent George Cowie, the Antiburgher minister, of Huntly. "As soon as I conversed with him," says Mr. Hill, "he stole into my heart." After preaching at several other places, he reached Glasgow. At Ayr, it was thought necessary to inform the town by the bellman, of his intention to preach,

* First Journal, p. 164.

—the honest man did his office as directed, and on the next day, which was the Sabbath, he was committed to prison for his *transgression.* Mr. Hill observes, "The better day, the better deed." He adds, "If the General Assembly could have inflicted the same punishment on me, for the use I made of my poor *clapper*, as they did on the poor bellman, for the use he made of the *clapper* of his bell, I had not been released from my visit to Ayr so soon as I should have wished."

From Ayr, Mr. Hill proceeded to Greenock, Paisley, and thence to Glasgow. Here he preached to great numbers, who were willing to listen to his clear statements of the only way of salvation. After again visiting Edinburgh, and preaching "for the despised Itinerant Society," he proceeded by easy stages to Wotton-under-edge, and arrived there on the 17th of August, after a journey of full sixteen hundred miles.

Soon after his return to Wotton-under-edge, Mr. Hill was busily occupied in writing his "Plea for Union, and for a Free Propagation of the Gospel, being an Answer to Dr. Jamieson's Remarks on his late Tour." He addressed

the Answer, "To the Edinburgh Society for Propagating the Gospel at home." The pamphlet is a spirited reply to the Doctor's "Remarks," which contain a defence of the peculiar tenets and views of his own church. Both the parties in this controversy were sometimes unmindful of the scriptural rule, "speaking the truth in love." Dr. Jamieson most strenuously opposed the employment of lay preachers; while, on the other hand, Mr. Hill supported the use of all kinds of agency likely to bring souls to God. As a preacher of the holy truths of religion, he prefers "an ingenious tinker like John Bunyan, with grace in his heart, to a thick-headed graduate."*

The worthy doctor strongly protests against our itinerant friend as "a bigot for liberality." The reply is in Mr. Hill's own felicitous style, "Did you ever hear of a man who was villanously honest, or foolishly wise? Rowland Hill, the strangest phenomenon that was ever exhibited in the north is *a liberal bigot;* or, "a bigot to liberality!"—an honest lawyer, a bigot to integrity! a good physician, a bigot

* Plea for Union, p. 69.

to skill! a worthy magistrate, a bigot to good order! husbands and wives, bigots to chastity! children and servants, bigots to obedience!"*

In concluding his second journal, he remarks, "Had my lot been to have served in Germany, in Holland, or in America, I would seriously have requested the instruction of the brethren respecting the mode of their worship, and have adopted it, being directed by the high example of the apostle Paul, "to become all things to all men, that I might gain some." This conduct I rigidly observed in the north. I remembered, while with them, the apostle's words, "To the Jews became I as a Jew," and, therefore, at all times adopted the psalms of the Jewish poet; because Scotland, beyond all Christendom beside, is left to admire the Old Testament psalmody, with their own peculiar method of conducting it. By such conformity, did I sin against the Lord? I certainly did not: their prejudices being much more educational than sinful."†

It is to be feared that very little good resulted from this second visit. A friend who resided in

* Plea for Union, p. 78.

† Tour through the Highlands, p. 38.

Scotland at the time, after the lapse of thirty years, has remarked that, "he never heard of a single conversion from the labours of that tour." How important, then, is it for ministers fully to "preach the Gospel," and not to be led away from their great work by the angry disputes of the times in which they live.

Mr. Hill, in his latter days, regretted the spirit he had displayed during this second tour, and resolved that if God should permit him again to visit Scotland, he would preach only "the unsearchable riches of Christ." He was able to accomplish his wishes in the summer of 1824. He reached Edinburgh in safety—had a profitable tour—no unhappy event transpired—and he returned to his resting-place at Wotton-under-edge, believing that "his labours had not been in vain in the Lord."

In the arrangement of the annual services connected with the London Missionary Society, in the month of May, Mr. Hill always requested the directors to permit the ministers from Scotland to occupy the pulpit at Surrey Chapel. He heard them with much interest. After Dr. Chalmers preached for the Society, on Mr. Hill's favourite subject, the influences of the Holy Spirit, he frequently referred to the

sermon. "I don't suppose," said he, on one occasion, "the good man would be allowed to preach at St. Paul's,—but if he were, it would not produce a thunder-storm;—indeed, it is a question with me, whether St. Paul himself would be admitted into his own cathedral."

Ireland was also visited by this excellent man, in 1793, and a second time in 1796. He was heard with attention by the warm-hearted Irish, and he appears to have much enjoyed his visit. On returning home after his last tour, he had a merciful preservation from shipwreck, to which he often referred with much gratitude. The captain of the vessel was addicted to the wicked and ungentlemanly habit of swearing. Mr. Hill thus wisely checked him, "Captain, let us have fair play. You must not have all the swearing yourself.—It's my turn next. You must not swear again till I have quite done." This wise admonition had the desired effect.

In the last sermon which Mr. Hill preached, a few days before he died, he referred with much satisfaction to his itinerant labours. He said, "I almost wish to be made young again,—if I could but again see such days, as when I first

preached at Tottenham-court Chapel, and was in the habit of preaching in the streets and lanes for want of room. Oh, how I love to recollect what I then felt!"

Until the close of life, Mr. Hill felt a strong objection to the ministers of religion being confined by any geographical limits as preachers of the Gospel. On this subject his remarks are worthy of record:

"When good men are fettered by human laws, which are bad, I pray that they may be set at liberty by a divine law: this must be good. If our good reformers had not transgressed the established parochial religion of the state, we had not been blessed with the reformation; and even the reformed may again degenerate and become depraved, and need another reformation. The Lord loved Lazarus, therefore he delivered him from the dead; when quickened, still he was bound: the Lord further says, "Loose him, and let him go." From all human trammels, dear Lord, release thy disciples; loose them, and let them go."*

May the prayer of the departed minister be answered. It is to be feared that the religious

* First Journal, p. 51.

wants of the people never will be supplied until ministers of all denominations consider souls of more value than the regulations of their churches. In London alone, the Honourable and Rev. Baptist W. Noel, in his able Letter to the Bishop of London, informs us, "that at the very least 536,000 persons are living without any Christian instruction, and without any public acknowledgment of God."* How are these wandering sheep to be gathered into the fold? Mr. Noel thus answers the question:—

"If we cannot attract the people to our churches, we must seek for them wherever they are congregated; if we have not buildings within which to gather them, we must preach to them in the open air. If precedents be demanded, to justify so bold an innovation upon our modern practice, the very strongest and most conclusive may be adduced: Our Lord preached to the people every where: in a house of Capernaum he preached to a crowd which thronged the room, and stood around the door;† from the top of a hill he preached to assembled

* State of the Metropolis Considered, p. 11.

† Mark ii. 2.

multitudes,* and when the pressure of the crowd was great, he entered into a boat, and preached.† No place seemed unfit where multitudes were gathered to listen. Agreeably to his own practice, he directed his disciples to "go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature,‡ and they obeyed. As during his life-time they "went through the towns preaching the Gospel, and healing every where,"§ so after his ascension they "preached every where."‖ In the temple, and in every house, they preached Him;¶ and the whole body of disciples at Jerusalem, when driven thence by persecution, imitating the apostolic example, "went every where preaching the word."** At his conversion Paul adopted the same course: in the forum of Athens he maintained, against the sophists of that city, the truths of the Gospel.†† At Ephesus he employed the school of Tyrannus for the same purpose.‡‡ At Tyre he knelt down for prayer with his Christian friends upon the sea-shore,§§ and lastly, when a

* Matt. v. 1.
† Mark iv. 1. Luke v. 3.
‡ Mark xvi. 15.
§ Luke ix. 6.
‖ Mark xvi. 20.
¶ Acts v. 42.
** Acts viii. 4.
†† Acts xvii. 17.
‡‡ Acts xix. 9.
§§ Acts xxi. 5.

prisoner at Rome, he made his own house the place of instruction to as many as would assemble to hear.*

"The practice of Christ and his apostles seems to me conclusive. What was right in them, must in similar circumstances be right in us. Led by the reason of the case, and warranted by these high precedents, the church has had out-door preaching, at different intervals, from that time to the present. The disciples of Wickliff went from town to town, and from county to county, to preach their doctrine, not only in churches and church-yards, but also in the midst of markets and fairs, and indeed in all places where multitudes were convened.† At the Reformation, the most eminent preachers of the kingdom, — Grindall, Scory, Jewell, Sandys, Sampson, Coverdale, and others,— used to preach at Paul's Cross to multitudes assembled in the open air, among whom were the mayor and aldermen of London, with distinguished persons from the court."

After referring to other examples of itinerant and public preaching, particularly to Whitefield

* Acts xxviii. 30, 31.

† Vaughan's Life of Wickliff, vol. ii. p. 197.

and Hill, Mr. Noel remarks, "If myriads, remaining still untaught, you call upon your clergy to do their duty, by providing curates to officiate in rooms, to be licensed for that purpose, in every part of the metropolis; thousands more may be instructed. If this does not fully meet the evil, another experiment may be made, (and since Christ must, if possible, be preached to all, no experiment by which we may hope to approximate to that end, should go untried,) you may call forth from among the ministers of the Establishment other Whitefields and Hills, and may see the signal effects of their ministrations renewed in our days. Should you fail to find them in the Establishment, (which I do not in the least contemplate, and for one, am ready at your lordship's command, to make the experiment myself,) then necessity has no law: "*Christ must be preached to perishing sinners.*" Before this necessity, all forms, however venerable, all rules, however salutary, must give way."*

It must be admitted that the ordinary means of grace are not sufficient to meet the spiritual necessities of the people. Great Britain and

* State of the Metropolis Considered, p. 84.

Ireland will not be evangelized until the churchman leaves "the beautiful house" where he worships, and the non-conformist his humble meeting-place, and the most *experienced* and talented of the pastors* shall practically attend to the directions of their exalted Saviour, "Go out quickly unto the *streets* and *lanes* of the city, into the *highways* and hedges, and bring in hither the poor and the maimed, and the halt and the blind; and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled." These words are still addressed to the faithful ambassador of Christ, who is qualified for the work, *and hears* the call of Providence to attend to it; and if the powers that be should *command* such ministers not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus† according to the clearly established custom of Christ and his apostles, what is the right course for them to pursue? should they

* When writing on the subject of itinerant preaching, Mr. Hill remarks, "Men far superior to those of the pastoral office, must be raised up in every age; men who can prove they are even "more than ministers of Christ, in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths often.'"—First Journal, p. 140.

† Acts iv. 6, 15, &c.

not answer, with Peter and John, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."*

In concluding this chapter, the attention of the reader is directed to the observations of the Rev. Thomas Scott in his practical observations on 2 Chron. xviii. 7 to 19.

"Notwithstanding the prejudices of mankind and the indiscretions of individuals, an *itinerant preacher*, if duly qualified and sent forth, is one of the most honourable and useful characters that can be found upon earth; and there needs no other proof, that when this work is done properly, and with perseverance, it forms the grand method of spreading widely, and rendering efficacious religious knowledge, than the experience of the church in all ages; for great reformations and revivals of religion have generally been thus effected. It is especially sanctioned by the example of Christ and his apostles, and recommended as the divine method of spreading the gospel through the nations of the earth: *itinerant preaching* having almost always preceded and made way for the stated ministery of

* Acts iv. 19, 20.

regular pastors. But it is a work which requires peculiar talents and dispositions, and a peculiar call in providence; and is not rashly and hastily to be ventured upon by every novice who has learned to speak about the gospel, and has more zeal than knowledge, prudence, humility, or experience. An unblemished character, a disinterested spirit, an exemplary deadness to the world, unaffected humility, deep acquaintance with the human heart, and preparation for enduring the cross, not only with boldness, but with meekness, patience, and sweetness of temper, are indispensably necessary in such a service. They who engage in it should go upon broad scriptural grounds, and dwell chiefly upon those grand essentials of religion in which pious men of different persuasions are agreed, plainly proving every thing from the word of God, running nothing into extremes, and avoiding all disputes, however urged to it, about the shibboleths of a party. In this way, itinerant preaching is a blessing which all who love the souls of men must wish to be vouchsafed to every part of every nation upon earth; and if those who are in authority would employ select men, of honour and approved piety and ability, protected and countenanced by them to go from city to city,

and from village to village, through the kingdom, teaching in every place the plain acknowledged truths and precepts of the Bible, immense good might be done."

In reference to these excellent remarks, the biographer of Mr. Scott observes,* "At the period of the Reformation, in the reign of Edward VI., a practice of the kind here recommended existed in our church, under the sanction of authority. Six eminent persons (of whom John Knox was one) were appointed to go through various districts of the kingdom as preachers; and that such an office was not continued has probably been a great loss to our church. I have heard a wise and excellent clergyman, lately deceased, who was always a strict adherent to order, lament the mismanagement of things in the Church of England, as compared with some other establishments. Had Whitefield and Wesley, he said, arisen in the church of Rome, that hierarchy would have given scope to their zeal, and yet have made it conduce to the support of the church, instead of being exercised so as to estrange the people from her communion."

* See Life of Scott, p. 172.

CHAP. V.

GENERAL CHARACTER OF MR. HILL AS A PREACHER; HIS STYLE, AND EXTENSIVE MINISTERIAL LABOURS.

DANGERS OF POPULARITY—EMPEROR ALEXANDER—MR. HILL'S LABOURS AT WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE, AND HIS GREAT SUCCESS—HIS COADJUTORS—THE REV. THEOPHILUS JONES—MR. HILL'S GREAT OBJECTION TO NOVELTIES—FELIX NEFF—EXTRACT FROM JAY'S FUNERAL SERMON—THE FARMER AND THE WHEELBARROW—THE MANUFACTORY CHIMNEY, OR ILLUSTRATION OF THE SPIRIT'S INFLUENCE ON THE SOUL—EXTRACT FROM VILLAGE DIALOGUES, CONTAINING THE DESCRIPTION OF A MINISTER—MR. HILL'S PREPARATIONS FOR THE PULPIT—PARTICULARS OF HIS LIBRARY—HIS FAVORITE AUTHORS—THE SOCINIAN CONTROVERSY, AND BELSHAM'S NEW VERSION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT—MR. HILL'S REMARKS THEREON—THE WORST BOOK IN MR. HILL'S POSSESSION—HE WAS AN EXTEMPORANEOUS PREACHER—HIS REMARKS THEREON—ORIGINAL LETTER TO REV. THOS. BULL—MR. HILL'S FIRST SERMON AT KINGSTON IN SOMERSETSHIRE, AND EXTRACTS THEREFROM—THE CABBAGE NET—HOES FOR CHILDREN—HIS GREAT LOVE FOR THE YOUNG—MR. HILL'S REMARK ON THE SUN; THE STARS; THE BREEZE; THE LADDER; THE WEDGE; THE STEAM-BOAT; THE LEAVEN; THE LAMB; THE BLIND MAN; THE BLIND CHILD; THE STATUARY; THE FOG—HUMANITY OF CHRIST—ON EXPOSITIONS—ACCOUNT OF MR. HILL'S LABOURS—PREACHED ONE AND TWENTY TIMES IN A WEEK—INTERESTING SCENE DURING MR. HILL'S AFFLICTION—SERMON AT LEEDS,—ORIGINAL LETTER—SPEECHES OF DR. WAUGH AND MR. HILL AFTER AN ORDINATION SERVICE—THREE ORIGINAL LETTERS—A CHRISTIAN MINISTER REMARK OF WHITEFIELD—NUMBER OF SERMONS PREACHED BY MR. HILL.

ONE of the most interesting views of the late Rowland Hill's character is, as a preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ. No man loved his

work better than he did, and it was his privilege to enjoy an uninterrupted and deserved popularity for more than sixty years. During that long period he was kept unspotted from the world, and was enabled to maintain a high state of heavenly-mindedness. Few ministers have been benefited by the applause of men, many have felt its withering influence. A popular preacher is like a man walking in slippery paths; and his daily prayer should be, "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe."

When the late emperor Alexander was looking at the statue of Napoleon, at Paris, which was placed upon a lofty pillar, he said, "I should be giddy, if I stood there." Preachers are raised high in official station, and they are only safe when their "conversation is in heaven." They will feel the giddy influence of popularity, unless, like the psalmist, they constantly "direct their prayer unto God, and *look up*."

Ministers, however eminent their attainments, are but *earthen* vessels. They have all the infirmities of humanity, and are constantly decaying. Let their people then be careful that they are not broken by overmuch pressure. Like a brilliant lamp, while they shine they consume. Could we see them in their retired

moments, were we acquainted with their depressing anxieties, and their constant toils, we should be more fervent in prayer on their behalf. "I am thankful," said a pious female, the wife of a useful minister, "that my beloved husband is not a popular preacher." She was also related to one who stood deservedly high in public estimation, and knew well the greatness of his mental conflicts.

A brief sketch has been given in a previous chapter, of the interesting and successful labours of Mr. Hill as an itinerant preacher. It must not, however, be supposed that he neglected the duties which devolved upon him as a stated Minister. After the erection of Surrey Chapel, he resided in London half the year, and then retired into the country.

At Wotton-under-edge, and the neighbourhood, the labours of Mr. Hill, and his pious coadjutors, were greatly blessed by the Lord; some pleasing particulars are stated in the following letter from Richard Hill, esq., to one of his brothers, dated from Hawkestone, November 25, 1775:—

"I am just returned from Bath, and from spending some days with my brother Rowland,

at his house in Gloucestershire, where I have seen the work, and power, and presence of God manifested in a wonderful manner indeed, through his instrumentality, among all sorts of people, with several of whom I have conversed, and find they have been wrought upon in a sound, rational, scriptural manner. One poor man, upon whose heart God was pleased to work through my brother's preaching, sent to desire to see him whilst I was there; and I went with him to the house. We found the man in bed, and past all hopes of recovery. Rowland asked him if he was afraid to die. He said, "No, that he knew God had loved him with an everlasting love, that He had called him by His Spirit, that He had freely pardoned all his sins, and that there was no condemnation for him." "I know," said he, "that Christ hath taken out the sting of death; in spite of all my sins, death cannot hurt me. I no more fear death than I do a visit from a Christian friend. I no more fear going into eternity, than I fear going into the next room." After prayer, Rowland said, "Well, Thomas, God be with you,—if we don't meet again in this world, I trust we shall meet in heaven." "Ay, Sir," replied he, with an effusion of tears

of joy, "I know that very well; but I have the advantage of you, for I shall be there first. Satan has been shooting at me,—but I tell him he may as well let me alone, for Christ will never suffer him to hurt me."

"What a testimony is this to the reality of the religion of the blessed Jesus,—and what encouragement do such facts afford us, to be continually living upon him, and to him, and for him, knowing that our labour shall 'not be in vain in the Lord.'"

During his residence at Wotton-under-edge, Mr. Hill was very laborious: he extended his efforts all round the neighbourhood, and often preached every evening in the week, except Saturday. Here, however, his mind was unbent, and he obtained relaxation in his flower-garden, and other rural pursuits. He was fond of the works of God, and from them gathered many of his happiest illustrations. The rose, and the lily, and the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, directed his thoughts to One who is "the chief among ten thousand," although they failed fully to unfold to his mind the beauties of Him who is the "altogether lovely."

Nor earth, nor seas, nor sun, nor stars,
Nor heaven, his full resemblance bears;
His beauties we can never trace,
Till we behold him face to face.

Here Mr. Hill seemed for a season to be in the peaceful haven, preparing for the future storm. His sermons, on his arrival in London, were full of illustrations drawn from the scenes he had left behind. One of his friends has remarked, in reference to his country retreat,* "Here he was indeed the patriarch of the place,—nor can any one who has not visited the spot, form a just estimate of his usefulness, or of the pleasing impression the mind receives while contemplating his dwelling-house and grounds, with the tabernacle adjoining, and its congregation of a thousand people, the almshouses erected for the pious poor, the lofty elms, planted with his own hand, and the distant and beautiful hills of the Principality, where he had been "in labours more abundant."

At Wotton-under-edge, as in London, he was engaged in numerous benevolent and religious objects, for the moral and spiritual good of the

* Rev. Thomas Jackson.

inhabitants. He was the philanthropist as well as the preacher. In harmonious efforts with his beloved and highly honoured lady, he fed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited the sick, and had compassion on all the sons and daughters of sorrow. It was here that he enjoyed the peculiar luxury of doing good. He knew his people, and was known of them, and his judicious and well-timed pecuniary assistance sometimes led the industrious artisan to comfort and affluence.

In these labours at Wotton-under-edge he was assisted by several excellent men, who fully made known to the people the truths of religion. The last minister was the Rev. Theophilus Jones, to whom Mr. Hill felt the strongest affection. Mr. Jones had been brought up to trade, but the providence of God clearly led him to become an ambassador of Christ. He was invited to preach at Rangeworthy, Nailsworth, and Wotton-under-edge. This providential visit led to his subsequent connexion with the venerable Rowland Hill. After supplying the Tabernacle for several weeks, he received an unanimous invitation to become the assistant minister at Wotton. Mr. Hill soon felt warmly attached to his young friend, and

in his own pecular style, thus described the preacher his people wished to hear: "They do not want a dictionary preacher, for they cannot understand him; nor a dashing preacher, for they will despise him; nor a bad-tempered preacher, for he will divide them; but a man with a good loud voice, a disposition to be taught, with brains in his head, and grace in his heart."

The invitation to settle at Wotton led Mr. Jones seriously to consider the path of duty. He gave himself unto prayer, that he might know the will of God. He feared lest a deceitful heart should lead him astray. After having sought the counsel of God and his people, he complied with the wishes of his Wotton friends, and entered upon his stated labours in November, 1816. He often referred to this interesting period of his ministerial life with grateful feelings to God, through whose grace he had been enabled, with some acceptance, to discharge the solemn duties of his office. He was publicly ordained on the 29th of October, 1817, on which occasion the Rev. David Charles, of Carmarthen, delivered a judicious charge from Acts xx. 27, and Mr. Hill presented the ordination prayer, with a solemnity and fervour

most distinctly remembered by many who were then present. The Rev. Ebenezer Morris preached an impressive sermon to the people from Psalm l. 5. Five of the ministers who engaged in this solemn service have since been removed to the church above.

After Mr. Jones gave himself up entirely to the ministry of the word, he became a most diligent student, and spent much time in prayer and meditation. The congregation over which he presided rapidly increased, and "much people was added unto the Lord." He was an acceptable supply at Surrey Chapel, and for fifteen years faithfully and successfully laboured in lovely co-operation with his venerable friend.

The time approached when this useful man was to finish his earthly course. In April, 1833, he preached at Newport, in South Wales. After delivering his last sermon in that place, and which proved to be the close of his ministry, he heard the painful intelligence that his venerable colleague, Mr. Hill, had been called to his eternal rest. He immediately proceeded to London, and was present at the funeral of his departed friend. He then appeared in good health, but during the few days that he remained in town he was affected

by the prevailing influenza. He was confined a day or two at the house of a friend, but no apprehensions of danger were entertained. Mr. Jones felt persuaded, that if he could get into the country, he should soon be restored to health. The writer's last interview with him took place a few hours before he got into the mail. He was then in good spirits, and invited him to spend a few days with him at Wotton, in the summer. He beautifully described the distant prospect from the neighbourhood of the town. How little did he suppose that at that moment he was "going up to the mount to die there;" that he had completed his ministerial course, and was soon to give up his account to God. He safely reached his home, but found no benefit from the change. He gradually became worse. The most alarming symptoms appeared, and baffled the skill of his medical attendants. His frame gradually sunk, and, with "a hope full of immortality," he expired, on the 4th of May, 1833, after an illness of only eight days. It is somewhat remarkable that Mr. Jones never preached after he heard of the death of Mr. Hill, his fellow-worker in the ministry, and thus both the pastors finished their work together—one at the age of eighty-nine, and

the other soon after he had passed his forty-fifth year.

"In the midst of life we are in death." We see from this narration that it is God who spares his people "to hoary hairs," and he also calls them to himself in the vigour of manhood. The dispensations of God may be sometimes mysterious, but they are always right. "Clouds and darkness are round about him; but righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne." The removal of the servants of God should lead us fervently to pray, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." Let not the young person presume on his strength. If the departed minister could now speak to the reader, he would say to him, as he did to a friend who visited him in the sick chamber, "Ah! brother, I have had the start of you; there are many before me in Christ. Oh! work the work of Him that sent you, while it is called day: the night cometh when no man can work."

The long-continued and deserved popularity of Mr. Hill, arose from his holy and consistent course, and his determination only to walk in the good old paths. He had a great dread

those ministers who were fond of introducing novelties into their sermons, and it is an interesting fact that Mr. Hill was never permitted to wander from the truths he first embraced. He tried them well, and, having found them sufficient, never gave them up. Novelties may please those who have "itching ears," but they feed not the church of God, and touch not the heart of the wandering prodigal. Novelties may give a short-lived popularity to the preacher, but they frequently cast a dark cloud before the cross, and obscure its glories. Man, but not Christ, is exalted, and therefore sinners are not drawn unto him. Mr. Hill, in his expositions of God's word, did not forget that there are many things revealed, which are not explained; and he therefore followed the rule of a pious Welch minister, "who never tied knots in the Scriptures where God had not tied them, nor attempted to untie the knots which God himself had tied."

There were, however, several natural causes which secured for Mr. Hill the long favour of the Christian public. He was a branch of an elevated and much respected family, and carried with him through life the air of a well-educated man. His voice was full, clear,

and melodious, and he could be distinctly heard by the largest assemblies, even to the close of his ministerial course. His person was tall and commanding, and he addressed his people like one who deeply felt the importance of his office. He had considerable powers of imagination, and often presented beautiful pictures, in illustration of divine truth, gathered chiefly from domestic life, or the works of creation. In his view,

"Heaven and earth were full of the majesty of Jehovah's glory."

Like Neff, the pastor of the shepherds of the Alps, he studied two books, that of nature, and grace; "he loved to go from the one to the other; to trace the hand of his Saviour, and, as it were, the impress of his feet, in the visible world; and, again, in the Gospel to contemplate the revelation of him who made and who upholds all things. He was naturally led to explain the one by the other."*

Mr. Hill possessed a good command of language, and his sermons were characterized by simplicity and deep feeling. "He had a remarkable talent," says Mr. Jay, in his funeral

* Life of Felix Neff, by Religious Tract Society.

sermon, "for seizing a powerful thought, and even a profound argument, and bringing it within the reach of the popular understanding, and also by means of some familiar, or shrewd, or striking allusion, furnishing it with a handle to enable them to take hold of it, and carry it away." The propriety of these remarks will be seen from the following facts:—

In an agricultural district, in which Mr. Hill had to plead the cause of Missions, he found he had a congregation of plain farmers, and their labourers, who were not accustomed to deep thought. He was anxious simply to answer the question, "Have not the heathen sufficient light? and if so, Why should we trouble ourselves about them." Mr. Hill admitted the fact, but contended that they did not properly use the light they possessed. His illustration was exceedingly simple and graphic. He supposed the whole family at the farm-house to be assembled round the large kitchen fire, on a winter's evening. The work of the day was over. The farmer was quietly smoking his pipe, and now and then entertaining the children with his oft-repeated tales. The good wife was knitting at his side. At this moment of quiet domestic comfort, the plough-boy

opened the door, and cried out in great alarm, "Master, master, there are thieves in the yard." All is immediate confusion. The farmer rushes to the closet to get his lanthorn,—he supplies it with candle,—and runs out, holding the light up to *his head*, and advancing with *cautious* steps in pursuit of the depredators. In the yard, the wheel-barrow has been improperly left, and over it the farmer tumbles. Why does he fall? Not because he is without light, but because he did not use it properly;—so it is with the heathen.

In a manufacturing district, Mr. Hill had also to plead the Missionary cause. He made many inquiries of the local minister as to the state of the people. He walked through the town to the place of worship, and in his way tarried at almost every shop, and examined the various articles exposed to sale. He was much struck with the quantity of smoke that ascended from the high chimnies of the manufactories. The minister feared that Mr. Hill's mind was wandering; that he would produce but little impression on the multitude assembled to hear him. He preached on the influences of the Holy Spirit. He powerfully improved all the local information he received. In one part of

his subject he wanted to shew the sweet willingness of the renewed soul to obey the will of God in all things,—and his illustration produced a very powerful impression. He said, "I have watched, this evening, the smoke ascending from your factory chimnies, and although there was scarcely any air, yet how obediently it moved in the direction of the softest breeze; so it is with the Christian, when God the Holy Ghost breathes upon his soul. He makes us willing in the day of his power."

Although the wayfaring man could understand Mr. Hill, he was plain without being vulgar. In his remarks on several ministerial characters, in his "Village Dialogues," he has evidently sketched his own likeness. "If by the sprightliness of his imagination he excited a smile of approbation without the least degree of levity, he knew how very soon afterwards to excite a tear. His preaching was, at times, like the sun, brilliant, and even if intervening clouds intercepted its bright rays, yet still the warmth was felt, and its fertilizing effects were evident. His sentiments were elevated and pure. If he descended, it was like the swallow, just to dip the tip of his wing in the stream, and again ascend. After he had taken his text,

he would for a time stick to it, and give it a just and correct interpretation; though afterwards, from the warm and animated frame of his mind, he would branch out so as to surprise his hearers by a brilliancy of thought peculiar to himself. His severer hearers would blame him for these eccentricities, and call him a rambling preacher, though still he was correct in his divinity, and well-intentioned in his design; and in all his ramblings he was ever sure to keep upon holy ground."*

After selecting a text from which he intended to preach, Mr. Hill was always anxious to ascertain the simple primary meaning of the Holy Spirit; and for this purpose he would consult the most distinguished critical writers. Having obtained its literal meaning, he well digested the subject in his mind. He, however, composed but little during his long ministry.

Mr. Hill was never a hard student, and, as a general rule, he read men rather than books. This remark applies especially to the latter years of his life. His library was small, but it

* See Village Dialogues, vol. ii. p. 117; and vol. iii. p. 43 & 242.

contained standard works of great excellence,—the contents of which he had well digested. The Commentaries he consulted were, Matthew Henry, Poole's, Deodati's, Ainsworth's, Trapp's, and the Assembly's Annotations, Guyse's Paraphrases, Macknight's Harmony, and his Translations of the Epistles. In addition to works on general history, he appears to have been attached to the writings of Bishop Hall, Bunyan, Reynolds, Perkins, Burgess, Sedgwick, Willett, Downham, Manton, Greenham, and Preston. He carefully read the works of John Howe, Dr. Owen, Jonathan Edwards, and President Davies. He also valued the writings of his friend Toplady, and his venerated Whitefield. He possessed but few modern works. He was, however, attached to Dwight, and read with deep interest the valuable publications of Magee and Wardlaw on the Socinian controversy.

On the latter subject this excellent man felt deeply interested, and frequently directed the attention of his people to the clear evidence which the Scriptures furnish of the Deity of the Saviour. The new version of the Testament, by Belsham, he frequently referred to,

for the purpose of shewing the numerous perversions it contained of the clearly revealed truths of the Spirit of God. In reference to this point, a minister, who was in constant intercourse with Mr. Hill during the latter months of his life, remarks, "The notes of Mr. Hill, on a copy of Belsham's Translation of the New Testament, are short, but some of them are triumphant refutations of the absurdities of that scandalous version. Mr. Hill told me that he read the whole of it carefully through, with a constant reference to the original text, comparing passage with passage. His acquaintance with the Greek Testament was extensive; and to the very close of life, it was his practice to quote the emphatic words of the original text, when he was conversing on any important subject. He told me that it was his custom to read through the Greek Testament every year." The new and perverted edition of the Testament, Mr. Hill kept in a particular drawer, in his library; and when he wanted to look at it, he was accustomed to say to his servant, "Bring me the worst book I have got in my possession."

On the back of this book, instead of the usual lettering-piece, Mr. Hill has written,—

"A most horrid perversion of the New Testament, by Belsham, and other infidels in disguise."

On the fly-leaf is written,—

"This perverted translation proves that Socinians stick at nothing to carry their point. It is nothing better than a direct imposition upon public credulity. In many instances the translation is not only preposterous and absurd, but most grossly false. If it is to be supposed that they (the translators) did their best, they were abominably ignorant, but if through trick and design, most profanely wicked."

From this volume the following specimens of Mr. Hill's remarks are extracted:—the Socinian reading is first inserted, and then Mr. Hill's observations,—

Matthew viii. 32. "And when they were come out, they went into the swine;"—'that is, 'the insanity passed into the swine.'

Mr. Hill. A sly trick to get rid of these devils. What an invention! the devils all ran mad.

Matthew xviii. 20. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."—'This promise, and the two

preceding verses, are to be understood as limited to the apostolic age.'

Mr. Hill. How profanely these wicked infidels limit the presence of Christ, who has said, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world."

Luke viii. 3. "Mary, called Magdalene, out of whom had gone seven demons,"—'who had been cured of insanity.'

Mr. Hill. An easy way of getting rid of seven devils at one stroke!

Luke x. 42. "Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things, and there is need of one thing only;"—'that is, there is need of one dish only for me to eat of.'

Mr. Hill. If so, to go on with the absurd interpretation, Mary chose a tit-bit for herself, and Martha was not to have a taste of it,—Oh, rational dissenters!

John viii. 44, 45. "Ye are of your father the devil; for he is a liar, and the father of liars."—'The devil, the principle of moral evil personified.'

Mr. Hill. So this personification of evil had a large family, and all the Scribes, Pharisees, &c. &c. were the spawn of this personification.

John xii. 31. "Now, the prince of this world

will be cast out."—'The prince of this world, that is, the Jewish hierarchy and magistracy will be abolished.'

Mr. Hill. Can they believe their own nonsense? The devil, the Jewish hierarchy! Poor *little* devil! Yorkshire was as large as Judea then was, and yet the prince of the power of the air is the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. It is thought by many that the devil breaks bounds dreadfully.

John xiii. 2. "And supper being come (the devil having put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot," &c.—'The devil; that is, his own bad passion.'

Mr. Hill. Here the devil is only a bad passion. When the devils possessed the swine,—it was, therefore, nothing but swine in bad passions.

John xiv. 30. "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me;"—'that is, I shall soon be arrested, and brought before the tribunal of the magistrate as a criminal, but no crime will be proved against me.'

Mr. Hill. The devil—a Jewish magistrate! The prince of this world—the Jewish rulers! What preposterous stuff!

John xvi. 15. "All things which the Father hath are mine."—'Every thing which relates to the kingdom of God in the world, is committed to my direction and superintendence.'

Mr. Hill. So that a steward, that is deputed to direct and superintend his master's property, has a right to say that all his master's property is his.

Acts v. 3. "Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart, to deceive the Holy Spirit?"—'*Satan*, a spirit and temper opposite to that of the Gospel. *To deceive* the Holy Spirit; that is, men who were inspired of God. Observe here, Satan and the Holy Spirit are personifications of qualities.'

Mr. Hill. So the Holy Spirit means men inspired of God!!! Rational dissenters! Impudent and barefaced assertions are the arguments of the Socinians.

Acts vi. 3. "Look out from among you seven men of good report, full of the (holy) Spirit."

Mr. Hill. What a trick! to put *holy* in crotchets, and thus to lower it down to their own fancy. Oh! these daring, abominable IMPOSTORS, to call this garbled perversion an "improved version," and then, by way of saving their credit, put in the correct translation,

("full of faith and power,") from the received version, in a note at the bottom.

Acts vii. 59. "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." —'This address of Stephen to Jesus, when he actually saw him, does not authorize us to offer prayers to him now he is invisible.'

Mr. Hill. Most curious! Christ may be worshipped when visible, but not when invisible. When I *see* the king on his throne, I may give him homage; but when I cannot see him, there is then no reason, or authority, to give him any credit as being *then* my king. Could these people believe their own nonsense?

Acts ix. 31. "And they were filled with the comfort of the Holy Spirit."

Mr. Hill. How can that be, if there is no Holy Spirit?

Acts x. 3. "He saw in a vision *evidently*, about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God."

Mr. Hill. How could that be, when angels are mere imaginations?

Acts x. 38. "Now God anointed Jesus Christ with the Holy *Spirit* and with power."

Mr. Hill. Here the Holy Spirit is left standing. Why did they not tell us in a note that God anointed Christ with a good disposition?

Acts x. 38. "Who went about doing good, and curing all who were oppressed by the devil."—'All the diseased whom our Lord healed are said to have been possessed by the devil.'

Mr. Hill. Then the blind, the lame, the dropsical, the deaf, the dumb, &c. &c. and Peter's wife's mother, (poor woman!) were all possessed of the devil.

Acts xvi. 31. "Sirs, what must I do to be *safe?*"—'This is beyond all doubt the sense of the passage; though Paul, in his reply, used the words in a more extensive signification; a practice common in these writings.'

Mr. Hill. Beyond all doubt, the sense of a rational dissenter *must* be the meaning, be it ever so nonsensical and preposterously absurd.

Rom. iv. 25. "Who was delivered for our offences;"—'that is, not to bear the punishment of them, or to appease the anger of God; but to abolish the dispensation by which men were condemned *as sinners*, and to introduce a new and better dispensation, by which they should be justified and healed *as righteous.*'

Mr. Hill. What mere *ipse dixit* impudence! what blundering tormentors these vile perverters are, of the plainest declarations of

divine writ! Could they themselves give credit to all their far-fetched perversions?

1 Cor. i. 2. "To all that in every place are called *by* the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Mr. Hill. This false and abominable imposition must have been through design,—ignorance cannot cloak them.

2 Cor. vi. 6. "By the *Holy Spirit.*"

Mr. Hill. Oh this Holy Spirit. He will creep into the Bible, nor can all the bold craft of the Socinians keep him out.

Phil. iv. 14. "I can do all things through *him* who strengtheneth me."

Mr. Hill. What an impudent omission of the name of Christ!

Colos. i. 1. "Favour be unto you, and peace from God our Father."

Mr. Hill. The improved version omits the words, "and from the Lord Jesus Christ," and puts them into a note at the bottom of the page. Mind the horrid trick of these imposers on the public credulity of mankind: without the least apology, and without the least authority, they actually obliterate that expression from the text, and attempt to cover their imposition by putting it in a note!

Colos. i. 20. "For it hath pleased the Father to inhabit all fulness by him."

Mr. Hill. What a barefaced impudent perversion!

1 Tim. iii. 6. "Fall into the condemnation of the accuser,"—'*accuser* is Archbishop Newcome's marginal version. His text is, *Such* condemnation as *that* of the devil.'

Mr. Hill. Here by the help of an Archbishop they get rid of the devil,—still, in a variety of instances they are obliged to leave him to pop out (notwithstanding all their tricks and arts) as a real existence.

Heb. i. 3. "Who being a ray of his brightness, and an image of his perfections," &c.

Mr. Hill. What mean tricks! Is this a translation? Oh, most abominably shameful!

Heb. vii. 26. "He ever liveth to interpose for them."—'*Perhaps* it may mean that Christ, in his exalted state, is exerting his powers in some unknown way for the benefit of his church.'

Mr. Hill. By this quibbling criticism, an attempt is made to deny what the Bible most positively asserts, the intercession of Christ, though they seem to give up the point by a most curious *perhaps*. Now, instead of all this

poor quibbling, to get rid of the plain meaning of words, why not say at once, with the rest of the same sort, that the Apostle was an inconclusive reasoner,—that he was warped with strong Jewish prejudices,—that his arguments were far-fetched,—that the whole of the Epistle is of very doubtful authenticity, and that Marcion's Gospel, and the Gospel of the Ebionites, though of no authority, yet they, being the "rational dissenters" of those days, they were quite sufficient.

Heb. xiii. 8. "Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever;"—'that is, the evangelical doctrine, as delivered by Christ and his apostles.'

Mr. Hill. The English of Jesus Christ is, evangelical doctrine!!!

James ii. 19. "The *demons* also believe and tremble;"—'that is, human ghosts.'

Mr. Hill. Poor James also is to be lugged in as speaking lies in hypocrisy;—of talking about devils when there are none! Who deserves the most credit, St. James, or the *rational* dissenters?

1 Peter i. 18. "Knowing that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a spotless and

unblemished lamb," &c.—'that is, delivered from your former state of heathenism, prejudice, and vice, by the Gospel, which was ratified by the blood of Christ.'

Mr. Hill. Mind the cloven foot in this cold perversion. Ask common sense and common honesty, if such could be the meaning of these words, where the sacrificed Lamb is referred to, by which an atonement and reconciliation was typically exemplified.

1 Peter v. 8. "Your adversary, the *false accuser*, walketh about as a roaring lion," &c.

Mr. Hill. How fearful these people are of taking the devil's name in vain!

Jude 6. "And the angels who kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in eternal chains," &c.—'*Perhaps* the writer may refer to some fanciful account of a fall of angels, contained in the apocryphal book which lay before him; a fact so important is not to be admitted upon such precarious evidence.'

Mr. Hill. To be sure not,—if these rational dissenters determine otherwise. Mind this curious *perhaps*, whereby they shuffle away the whole of the above passage. Supposing that St. Jude was weak enough to believe such a

mere idle tale,—the "rational dissenters" are of a wiser breed.

Rev. v. 14. "And the elders fell down and worshipped."—'This homage, paid to a symbolical representation of Christ in a visionary scene, by symbolical persons represented as visibly present with him, cannot justify the actual worship of Christ, when he is not visible.'

Mr. Hill, referring to the omission of the words, "Him that liveth for ever and ever," says, "Vile omission!" and adds, "So the nature of worship depends upon being visible or invisible. No man hath seen God at any time, therefore no man should worship God at any time. Socinian logic!!!

Rev. xiv. 11. "And the smoke of their torment shall go up for ever and ever."—'The punishments threatened ought, in all reason, to be understood of temporal punishments, and not of the sufferings of a future life. So in Jude, ver. 7. Sodom and Gomorrha are represented as suffering the vengeance of eternal fire;—that is, of a temporal calamity, a fire which completely destroyed them.'

Mr. Hill. That is, the punishment which is to last to all eternity is to end in time, and the burning of Sodom, &c. in time, is a full proof

sinners are not to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire in the world of spirits! Awful as the truth may be, what the Bible asserts, we are bound to believe.

Having shown by these extracts the preacher's great jealousy for his Master's honour, we may observe, that Mr. Hill was, in every sense, an extemporaneous preacher, and was strongly opposed to ministers' reading their discourses. He observes on this subject:

"The dull modern way of reading, instead of preaching, from the pulpit, I rather choose to leave to others, than to practise myself, as it only tends to lull the people to sleep, and to cast additional loads of ignorance upon our ministers.* If a minister, after having duly considered the leading truths of his text, would but venture, under the Divine blessing, to enforce the subject from the natural ability which God may have given him, he would find his heart animated by the subject, and preaching would soon be his *daily* delight."†

Mr. Hill would occasionally preach without much previous thought. This was sometimes the case when travelling for the Missionary

* Token for Rouquet, p. 5.

† First Journal, p. 161.

Society,—but this practice was the exception to his general rule. He could preach with much less preparation than most ministers, but he never recommended any one to present a sermon upon the altar of God, which had not previously cost some portion of labour. At those seasons, when Mr. Hill had been unable to prepare, he felt himself completely dependent on the state of his feelings; hence, if he had not the usual crowd to excite him, he found but little pleasure in his work. To this point he partly refers in the following eccentric epistle to the Rev. Thomas Bull,—

"My dear Brother Bull,

"Though I was *Ass* enough to promise your *Bullship* to give you a visit at Newport-Pagnel Anniversary, yet, if I had thought a little more favourably for myself, as I am now no chicken, I should have requested you to have provided for yourself an abler hand nearer home. If you could even now let me off, I should be thankful; but if I must suffer for my folly, I have only to say I must submit; and if I do submit, it must be on the first time you mention in your letter, the 7th of May, which will be much more convenient to me than the 21st. Sometimes, when

subjects do not *bite* properly, I make myself appear so much like an old fool in what I say, that I am not only ashamed of myself, but of the cause I would wish to serve; and this is another strong reason why you should give me absolution from my promise, which I must perform on your demand.

"Your ever affectionate Brother,

"R. HILL."

"To Rev. Mr. Bull,
"Newport Pagnel, Bucks."

The *first* sermon which Mr. Hill printed was the one he delivered in the parish church of Kingston, on the 20th of June, 1773, when he entered upon his curacy. He termed it the "Gospel Message," from 1 Cor. ii. 1, 2, "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God, for I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

The biographer of a celebrated painter, after describing the first sketch of the artist, remarks, that in this early production might be discovered lines, or touches, which could also be

traced in his latest and most matured productions. Such was the case with the first efforts of Mr. Hill. The following commencement of the Sermon will recall to the minds of his former hearers many similar introductions, even to the close of his ministry:

"How awful is the consideration, that every soul which is born into the world is born *for an eternity!* an eternity that will prove to every individual either a state of the completest happiness, or of the most excruciating torture and deepest despair. My dear friends, I pray you to consider,—there is not a single soul among you, to whom this most important truth does not *personally* belong. A little while, and all will be over. Oh that you may think of it. If you are *lost once*, you are *lost for ever*."

This introduction had no immediate connexion with his text, but was calculated to fix the attention of his hearers. He then proceeds with a variety of desultory remarks on preachers, and then comments on his text. "These words plainly prove that *plain* preaching is the *best* preaching." His observations on this point, and on the great subject of the text, occupy the first twelve pages. He then gives the following divisions—

Your fallen condition by nature and by practice must be first insisted on. This we will prove,

1. By express testimony of Scripture.

2. By your own experience, and

3. Will consider the curse pronounced against sinners so long as they continue without an interest in Christ.

Under these heads he discusses the fall, the depravity of the understanding, the affections, and passions, and he closes with remarks on holiness of heart, &c. Now, it will be seen that the principal divisions of the subject do not very strictly present to the mind the leading truths contained in his text. Mr. Hill was a rambler at the commencement of his career, and maintained the character until the close of his useful ministry.

There was a natural restlessness about Mr. Hill, which must have rendered mental abstraction a difficult task. He, however, had recourse to some employments to engage his hands, and then his mind would sweetly wander over the field where

> "Seeds of immortal bliss are sown,
> And hidden glory lies."

On the Saturday morning I have seen him busily employed in making a cabbage-net, and in

the evening to my surprise he was turned into a shoemaker. He made beautiful little shoes for infants, and would sometimes kindly promise to his female friends, on their marriage, that he should be happy to present "the first-born" with a pair of nursery slippers. He had a pattern of the various parts from which he cut out the shoe, and then sewed them together with very great neatness. These little productions of a great man were much valued by those who were fortunate enough to procure them.

His great love for children also induced him to cut out for their use the letters of the alphabet, which he had printed on card paper, and put into little paper bags. He considered that by throwing these letters about, and calling upon the child to bring a particular one, amusement was combined with the advance of knowledge in the young mind.

The following passages from Mr. Hill's sermons will give the reader a correct view of his powers of imagination.

The Sun.—All the lights in the world put together will not unfold to us the glories of the sun; it is only to be seen by its own light. So the Sun of righteousness is seen by human

eyes, as "the brightness of the Father's glory," by the light which guides his people to himself.

The Stars. — While we look high, we see some stars, but we can scarcely discover them, because they are dim; but if we look low, we see much brighter stars, shining in a lower sphere. And those stars that strike us the least, and those that shine the brightest, have all of them their appointment of God, and all receive their light from the sun. So let a sinner be born of God, whatever station he may fill, he will fill it to God's glory,—he cannot help it any more than the sun can help shining, —any more than the moon can help shining when the sun shines upon it,—he will fill that state as a child of God; because the light of the glory of God shines in his heart through Jesus Christ our Lord. He who has that light must shine as a light in the world.

Some stars there are which so faintly twinkle, that we can scarcely discover them. Oh that you and I may be begging God to enlighten us with that blaze of heavenly light, that we may shew forth the praises of Him who hath called us "out of darkness into his marvellous light."

The star in the East was a safe guide to the

wise men; so is the Spirit of truth, and the star of Divine Providence to the child of God.

The Breeze.—It is that preaching which beautifully sets forth "the *kindness* of God our Saviour, which is generally more impressive and useful than the exhibition of the terrors of the law. The loud and sudden thunder-storm alarms us for the moment, but soon passes away, and is forgotten; but the delightful and cooling breeze which we sometimes feel at the close of a summer day, refreshes and cheers us. Such is the effect of 'the still small voice of the Gospel of peace.'"

The Ladder.—The world has a sad effect upon the professors of religion. It makes them very giddy, if they get too much connected with it. "I was once ascending a ladder, and soon found my head beginning to swim. "Look up, sir, look up, sir," cried a workman, "nobody feels giddy when he looks up." And so I found it. "Look up," brethren, in all your engagements, and then your conversation will be sweetly in heaven! and you will escape the giddy influence of the present world.

The Wedge.—How delightfully the grace of God brings the hardened and rebellious heart

of man into holy submission to his power; but how various are the means which are employed. I have noticed in the country, that when the labourer has been anxious to fell the lofty tree, he does not expect to do it by one stroke. He first gets in his smallest wedge, which makes way for another, and so he gradually advances, until he strikes the last blow, and down comes the noble tree. In this way the poor sinner is led by the Spirit of God,—one conviction follows another,—one providence follows another,—until at last the rebel is brought in willing submission before the Saviour's feet, crying, "Lord, save, or I perish."

The Steam-boat.—On returning from the country, where he had been preaching, he referred with great beauty to the steam-boat on board of which he had travelled. Among other things he remarked, "How delightful it was to see the fine vessel dashing through the waters, with the wind and tide against her;—but how did she accomplish the great work? Oh, it was the fire within her that produced the power;—and how does a poor believer swim against the tide of his corruptions, and stem the torrent of worldly opposition? Oh, it is the power of the Spirit within him which is constantly supplied

in answer to his fervent and persevering prayers.

The Leaven.—It is very curious how the leaven in the bread lightens, and renders it palatable and good; so, when the leaven of the Gospel comes into the heart, if affects every faculty of it, and the truth is known by its power, as felt on the mind.

The Lamb.—Walking through my field on a winter's morning I met with a lamb, as I thought, dead, but taking it up, I found it just alive; the cruel mother had almost starved it to death. I put it into my bosom, and brought it to my house,—there I rubbed its starved limbs, warmed it by the fire, and fed it with warm milk from the cow. Soon the lamb revived: first it feared me, but afterwards it thoroughly loved me. As I mostly fed it with my own hand, so it followed me wherever I went, bleating after me whenever it saw me, and was always happy whenever it could frisk around me, but never so pleased as when I would carry it in my arms.

Jesus is a shepherd, the Shepherd of souls; and of him it is said, he carries the lambs in his bosom, and gently leads those that are with young. If you desire to love Jesus, read that

blessed book the Bible,—there you will hear such things of the love of Christ to poor ruined sinners, as I hope will melt your eyes to tears, and your hearts into love.

The Blind Man.—Ignorant minds may wander about because they know nothing of the truth, but to those whose minds are enlightened from above, all the great doctrines will appear perfectly clear. I may take a man out on a beautiful night, and, pointing to a star of the first brilliancy and magnitude, I may say, "Do you see that beautiful star?" he may say, "No; I do not." "Why, how is this? the man is blind,—and so, because he cannot see them, are they not there?"

The Blind Child.—I remember once being in company where a very fine child was present; he was very beautiful, but he was *blind*, and he laughed at those who lamented his great affliction. Ah! but if he had once enjoyed the blessing of vision, *he* would have lamented his loss too! Let us once see the glory and grace of the Saviour as displayed in the Gospel, and feel them applied to our hearts, and we shall never forget their beauty.

The Statuary.—While a minister preaches redemption by Christ, unless he shews also the

glorious effects of this redemption, he tells you of a casket without a jewel, or sets before you a fine-wrought picture, which leads you to admire his ability, though it gives you but little idea of life. I remember once conversing with a celebrated sculptor, who had been hewing out a block of marble to represent one of our great patriots, Lord Chatham: "Here," said he, "is not that a fine figure?" "Now, sir," said I, "can you put *life* into it? or else, with all its beauty, it is still a block of marble." Now, Christ, by his Spirit puts life into a beauteous image, and enables the sinner he creates anew to live to his praise and glory.

The Fog.—We cannot always enjoy the presence of our Saviour,—unbelief will hide him from us. Sometimes in the winter it is so foggy, that if you were to stand on Ludgate-hill, you could not see the Cathedral, but it would *be* there, though you could not discover it. So it is with our Divine Lord. He is always with us, though we cannot always see him,—but when the dark fog of unbelief is removed by the bright shining of the Sun of righteousness upon us, then we are able to say, "We all with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same

image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

The Humanity of Christ.—What a mercy it was that the Lord veiled his bright glories in the humanity he wore when he came into this world. His glory was seen on the mount of transfiguration, but when I come into a better state, I shall have an eye capable of receiving the fulness of the light of that glory into my mind. Oh, what joy shall I then behold; yea, believing, I shall rejoice with a joy that will be "unspeakable and full of glory."

The sermons of Mr. Hill abounded with short and beautiful passages, which, though frequently unconnected with his subject, contained much important instruction. The following are a few specimens:—

"Those that are rich furnish their houses well, so that they may entertain their guests well. Oh, may the Spirit furnish my heart with heavenly furniture, suitable for the residence of my God."

"The Sabbath-day is the Christian's market-day, upon which the soul lays in the provision for the week, and memory is the messenger that brings them out for the refreshment of the soul, just as they are wanted."

"If we throw oil upon water, it will swim at the top of it. It is even so with the oil of grace, it is always uppermost,—it will not sink and mix with the corruptions of our human nature."

"As we have to dig into the earth for gems, which shew their lustre when brought to the surface, and are exposed to the light; so it is our duty to remove the rubbish and ignorance of the mind, that the gem which is to be found in many a poor child's mind, may be brought forth, to shine to the glory of God and his own happiness."

"We come to the house of God, that we may be taught heavenly conduct in our earthly calling."

"If you want to see the height of the hill of God's eternal love, you must go down into the valley of humility."

"The world is made up of a top and a bottom. It is froth at the top, and mud at the bottom; and if there is any clear water, it runs through the middle of society."

"What a mercy it is to have some fine climbing thoughts after God, and to find our hearts going out of ourselves, to seek what we shall never fully discover, 'the unsearchable riches of Christ.'"

The sermons Mr. Hill delivered were very like expository lectures. He invariably gave an interesting comment on the context. Indeed, it very frequently happened that he had not been able to reach his text, when the time admonished him to conclude his address. His remarks, it has been seen, often contained the most beautiful gems. He always recommended preachers, "to take plenty of elbow room." On the subject of expositions, he remarks,

"As it was certainly the most primitive, so surely it must be the most profitable, to deal with the people directly from the word of God. The richness and glory which rest upon the language of inspiration are peculiar to itself; and I have always found that weighty, warm, applicatory remarks immediately therefrom, come with a peculiar influence to the heart. Surely, therefore, nothing less than a whole chapter, or at least a considerable portion, should be selected for these occasions. We are never so assured that we make people wise unto salvation, as when we lead them to be acquainted with the pure word of God itself."†

† First Journal, p. 14.

The pastor of Surrey Chapel was a *laborious* minister. He occasionally preached more than twenty sermons in a week when travelling for the cause of God. "I do think," he would say, "that once in my life I did earn my daily bread. I was spending several weeks with a friend in North Wales, and she made me preach for every meal, so that before breakfast, dinner, tea, and supper, I had to ascend the pulpit." On one occasion, being present with a venerable minister who had retired from active service, and only occasionally preached, he remarked, "I would sooner wear out, than rust out." He was fond of such remarks as the following: "a good pulpit perspiration is a famous thing to keep a man in good health;"—"if some ministers were to be fed according to their preaching, they would not look so plump as they do."—"Of all diseases a man can die of, to die of fat and laziness is the worst."

Like the apostle of old, he was in labours more abundant, and even till within a short period before his dissolution, after eighty-five winters had passed over his head, he would preach twice on the Sabbath day, address the members of his church on the Monday

evening, and preach lectures in his chapel on Tuesday evening and Friday mornings; and all this was done in addition to frequent occasional services. At the age of eighty-seven he left town to reach Wotton by a circuitous route. He arranged to preach every night in the week on his way to Leamington, where he had to supply on the Sabbath day. His work was his constant delight.

There were seasons when affliction kept him out of the pulpit, and he was confined to his room; but it was necessary to keep a kindly watch over him, as there was danger of his moving off to chapel as soon as he heard the distant notes of the organ. The evening of the new year was always a happy season with him, when the "general communion of saints" was enjoyed at Surrey Chapel. He was once confined with inflamed eyes, which were bound up. He most reluctantly consented to remain at home. Just as the people were approaching the table of the Lord, the venerable man made his appearance. He had on a large blue cloak, and had actually, though blindfolded, found his way from the house into the chapel alone. The excitement produced by his appearance

cannot be described. There was one burst of affectionate feeling, when the people saw their beloved pastor pressing towards the communion table, while the officiating ministers were urging him to retire. In the midst of this scene he was heard loudly exclaiming, "My dear people, they won't let me say one word to you." He then pronounced a brief but touching benediction upon them, and retired from the chapel.

On another occasion he left London to advocate the claims of Christian Missions. He had been much indisposed, and his friends thought it rather imprudent that he should engage in such duties. He, however, promised to be brief in his sermons, and a friend who travelled with him kindly undertook to check him when he found him forgetting his promised limits. At Leeds the venerable man addressed a great multitude in the Cloth Hall. He was excited by the scene, and became inattentive to the gentle admonitions which he received by a pull at his coat tail. At length he told the people what he had promised, and how his brother ——— had been pulling him by the coat. "Never mind," he added, "let us have another

pull, a strong pull, and a pull altogether, and who knows but what the devil's throne may fall from some poor sinner's heart."

Mr. Hill would occasionally very frankly tell the feelings of his mind as to his labours in the sanctuary. He said, "When I am in the pulpit I think no one preaches so badly; but when I am out of it, listening to others, then I think no one preaches so well." Though he would very often say that he wished he could see his successor, that he might give up the work, yet no one believed that he would ever retire from it until he was called into another world. For several years he was obliged to sit while preaching,—and he was in the pulpit, urging his people to "be steadfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord," only nine days before he finished his earthly course.

The feelings of Mr. Hill, when prevented by affliction from fulfilling an engagement, will be seen from the following letter:—

"London, May, 1831.

"My dear Friend,

"During the Missionary week I grazed my shin-bone; the injury, however, appeared so

trifling, that I did not not suppose I should be interrupted in my previous engagements; though I have waited till the last moment, yet the increased inflammation deprives me of all hopes of being able to accomplish my intended journey. I am forbidden by my surgeon all sorts of exercise and exertions; and if I transgress, the result is immediately against me. Under such circumstances, I need make no apology for what could not be prevented. I think I had rather *labour* than be *lazy;* still, while it is my duty to say "thy will be done," may that be the prayer of yours, very affectionately,

"R. HILL."

"London, Friday Evening.

"Rev. Thomas Bull,
Newport Pagnel."

On the recognition of the Rev. John Arundel as the pastor of a Christian church in the Borough of Southwark, Mr. Hill met the late Dr. Waugh, and engaged with him in the service. When the friends met together at the close of the sacred engagements, Mr. Hill and Dr. Waugh were placed at the head of the table, next the chairman. They were both of

them fine dignified men, and the bright eye of the Scottish preacher sparkled with peculiar brilliance. The health of both was drunk by the company, and with short and characteristic speeches they acknowledged the kindness of their friends. Dr. Waugh threw out some of his sweetest thoughts, (for they were thoughts of Christian love.) "I dinna ken," said he, "how I came to mix with so many of you who do not belong to my church,—but the more I ken you, the more I love you. Indeed, I see no real difference between Christians, though they may differ in names." He then archly remarked, "You know, my friends, we can't be all right, but then as a good Presbyterian I follow the advice of the apostle, in reference to you, 'We, then, that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.'" These remarks were well received. Mr. Hill was called for, and he echoed the liberal sentiments of his dear brother Waugh. In reference to some things which had been said upon his "good old age," he remarked, "I dare say you young ministers would be glad to live to be old men. Now, I will tell you how to attain your wishes,—preach three times a day, and seven days in the week, and ther

you'll find not only that you are in a fine state of health, but that you stand a good chance of becoming old men."

The following letters, addressed to a minister, who, for various reasons, had surrendered his charge, will shew the deep importance which Mr. Hill attached to the diligent and constant fulfilment of the duties connected with the Christian ministry. The appeals he makes to his respected friend are very affecting:—

"Surrey Chapel, March, 1830.

"My dear Friend,

"I have been under the necessity of writing to Mr. ———, respecting the wants of your people, which are painfully urgent, by your having altogether given up that sacred office to which you were solemnly designated by the imposition of hands. I fully supposed you only wanted a helpmate in the work, and that you would sooner resign your life, than resign an office which you never should have undertaken, unless it had been your determination to die as a devoted servant in the sacred work. A truly devoted minister, I think, would be inclined to say, let me rather be shut up in my coffin, than shut out of the pulpit. Old, very

old, as I am, yet still I trust I find it not less my privilege than my duty, to dedicate the very last of my declining strength to His glory, in the accomplishment of the sacred work. Should a physician tell me that my life may be in danger if I continue to preach,—I will answer him, "Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God." So said Paul, so says poor old Rowland Hill, and would to God my friend ——— may be enabled to say the same. Though I hope I shall be disappointed, yet I have my fears, that as I may not see you at Mr. ———'s, so a call upon you under present circumstances may prove painful to us both. Oh, what a mercy to be truly blest with a dedicated and devoted spirit, while it is most truly pleasant to meet such friends on every occasion. There are some few that keep going forwards; there are others who stand still; and there is a third class that are going backwards. How preferable is death to a state like theirs! How happy shall I be on my journey, to find that my friend, through some constitutional timidity, has only made a

halt, that he may afterwards make a more firm and steady march in the sacred warfare, in which, as a minister, he is most solemnly engaged. Oh, that at all times I may be enabled to subscribe myself your most faithful and affectionate *fellow-labourer* in the vineyard of the everlasting Gospel of Christ,

"R. HILL."

In reply to a letter which he received in answer to the one just given, Mr. Hill remarks,

"I have been out of town for a short time, and am but just returned. I hope you will give me the fullest credit that it was not my intention to have grieved you by any thing that has dropped from my pen. I could not have expressed myself otherwise, as circumstances were then before me. When we were favoured with a visit from you, it did not appear to me otherwise than that you enjoyed your accustomed share of health,—nor had I the most distant idea that you meant to relinquish that most solemn office to which you had been designated by imposition of hands. But weakness of constitution is urged as a reason for this step, and testimonies of this

sort have been transmitted to prove the fact. Though I confess I had no conception of the debilitated state of my friend's health, yet it must be left to himself to determine how far he is no longer capable of attending to the ministry, in quiet conversational exhortations at the Lord's table, as well as in convivial conversation at our own tables; or whether a few pastoral or occasional visits to the sick would have been above the strength even of a debilitated constitution, more than what is called for in his general occupations through life. Here a proof would have been left, that if more could be done, more would be done, as soon as health might in some measure be restored. I shall wait with patience for the present, and continue the pleasing hope that I shall at all times subscribe myself,

"Yours most sincerely and affectionately,

"R. HILL."

The following letter was also addressed to the same minister:—

"My dear Friend,

"As you laboured so kindly and freely, it was quite proper that you should seek for an

assistant, and that the people should liberally provide you one of the same mind and spirit with yourself, while I could not then for a moment admit the vague report that you had, or ever could, out of love to the people, resign your charge altogether. But you tell me of your constitutional weakness,—granted: that some there are of robust and athletic constitutions, in appearance, but are not so in reality; but surely you are not so diseased and debilitated, at least it appeared so to us, that sufficient strength was not left you, so as to enable you occasionally to drop a short word of exhortation from the pulpit, or among the Lord's more immediate people, at the solemn time of your communion: nor could a short but solemn word of prayer have been more injurious to you in the house of God, than in your own dwelling,—nor would it have been a greater exertion to have entered into occasional conversation with your communicants; and as you are by no means advanced in age, you are not to conclude that your present weakness is to last for life. If even much caution might have been found necessary, yet surely a relinquishment of your office altogether is quite another story. If all the physicians in the world were

to tell me I must renounce my ministry on account of my increasing debility, and that such debility would increase till a speedy death would be the result, I would keep my fee in my pocket, and labour till I died. Believe me to be,

"Yours very sincerely,

"R. HILL."

These letters will remind the reader of the remarks of the excellent Whitefield, the beloved friend of Mr. Hill, "I am now brought to the short allowance of preaching but once a day, and thrice on Sunday. One physician prescribes *a perpetual blister*, but I have found *perpetual preaching* to be a better remedy,—when this great catholicon fails, it is over with me."

Not many ministers have had the privilege of preaching a greater number of sermons than Mr. Hill. He kept an account of them, from which it appears that up to June 10, 1831, he had preached 22,291 times. It may, therefore, be fairly concluded, that up to the close of his long ministry, of 66 years, he had preached at least twenty-three thousand sermons, being an average of nearly three hundred and fifty

every year.* Many of these discourses were delivered in streets and fields. In reference to these services Mr. Hill has said, that as far as he had ascertained, more souls were converted under those sermons, than under any others that he preached.

Having thus shown the great devotedness of Mr. Hill to his much-loved work, his faithfulness and success will be shewn in a future chapter.

* It has been thought by many friends that this calculation is far below the actual number of sermons preached by this laborious minister. Whitefield, in 34 years, preached 18,000 sermons; and Wesley, who preached nearly double that period, delivered 40,500 sermons.

† See page 148.

CHAP. VI.

MR. HILL'S FIDELITY AND SUCCESS AS A MINISTER.

THE FAITHFUL PREACHER—WANT OF SUCCESS DEPRESSED MR. HILL—HIS DOCTRINAL VIEWS—THE TRINITY—ANECDOTE OF A SOCINIAN—THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD, AND MAN'S AGENCY—ON PREACHING TO THE ELECT—EXTENT OF THE ATONEMENT—THE LAW A RULE OF LIFE—JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION—ANTINOMIAN ERRORS—THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES—PERSONAL HOLINESS—BAD TEMPERS—THE KENTISH FEMALE—THE MINISTER REPROVED—THE BROKEN PLATE—THE BANKRUPT—THE DOUBTING LADY—THE CONFIDENT ANTINOMIAN—RELATIVE DUTIES—MR. JONES OF ST. SAVIOUR'S—MR. HILL'S GREAT LOVE OF THE BIBLE—REFERENCE TO SEVERAL TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE—REMARK ON THE TYPES—ON THE GRACES OF REPENTANCE—BEAUTIFUL REMARK ON REPENTANCE—MR. HILL'S GREAT SUCCESS—VISIT TO AN AGED CLERGYMAN—THE YOUTHFUL CONVERT, AFTERWARDS A PREACHER—THE DISCIPLE OF PAINE, AND A NEW PLAN OF REFORM—GREAT SUCCESS AT PORTSEA—THE ITINERANT SOCIETY, AND MR. DENSHAM—THE TWO BROTHERS IN LONDON—FACTS MENTIONED BY REV. MR. WILKS, AND REV. JOHN NEWTON—SERMON TO SAILORS—THE RAMBLING SINNER—THE TALE OF THE PIGS, AND ITS EFFECTS—DEAN MILNER'S REMARK—THE TWO BROTHERS AT DEVONPORT—COLLECTIONS AT SURREY CHAPEL—IMPERFECTIONS IN MR. HILL AS A PREACHER, AND HIS DEEP REGRET WHEN HE TRIFLED IN THE PULPIT—REMARKS ON DIFFERENT KINDS OF PREACHERS—DR. CHALMERS, HALL, MASON, JAY—THREE ORIGINAL LETTERS ON MINISTERIAL CHARACTER, AND PROPER QUALIFICATIONS—ANECDOTES OF MR. HILL AS A PREACHER—BEAUTIFUL SIMILE—THE SPRAT—ON FUNERAL SERMONS—THE POOR CHRISTIAN'S REMARKS ON AFFLICTION—PROPHECY—THE PROPHETICAL FEMALE—ON THE PERSONAL REIGN OF CHRIST—THE GIFT OF TONGUES—PASTORAL VISITS AND ENGAGEMENTS—ANONYMOUS LETTERS—THE BLIND POET—DISINTERESTED LABOURS.

A MINISTER of Jesus Christ is responsible only for the right discharge of the duties of his h

office; for the promise is not made to the successful preacher, but to him who has fully made known the whole counsel of God. "Be thou *faithful* unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." There are many devoted men, who have frequently exclaimed with the prophet, "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought." Let not the faithful labourer despond, since the inspired and evangelical prophet sometimes "walked in darkness, and had no light." It is an encouraging thought to know that "our judgment is with the Lord, and our work with our God." Success cheers us in the path of duty, but "though Israel be not gathered, yet shall the faithful preacher be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and his God shall be his strength."

The want of success, however, greatly depresses the mind, and Mr. Hill felt this. He considered it was the duty of a minister to ascertain the cause for the withholding of Divine influence. He would often express himself in the pulpit, in the spirit of the following remarks, which he wrote at a time when there were but few additions to the church at Wotton-under-edge. "The congregation is as large as in the best of our days; notwithstanding,

I fear but little real work has of late been done. From whence, my God, is this suspension? Is the fault in me, or is it in them? Or, is it that I am to be called elsewhere, by being driven to give a less portion of my time to a people who "by seeing see, and do not perceive; and by hearing hear, and do not understand."

Such was the constant fidelity of Mr. Hill to the souls committed to his care, that his dying language to his congregation might have been, "I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men." In the course of his public and pastoral ministrations he would touch upon all the truths of God, but there were some subjects that he did not frequently introduce into his sermons. He believed in the doctrine of the holy and blessed Trinity in Unity, and on "Trinity Sunday" he always declared, in scriptural terms, his views on that deeply mysterious subject. The collect of the church expressed his creed upon the point, where it is said "that God has given unto his servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the divine majesty to worship the Unity." It was generally on

assistant, and that the people should liberally provide you one of the same mind and spirit with yourself, while I could not then for a moment admit the vague report that you had, or ever could, out of love to the people, resign your charge altogether. But you tell me of your constitutional weakness, — granted: that some there are of robust and athletic constitutions, in appearance, but are not so in reality; but surely you are not so diseased and debilitated, at least it appeared so to us, that sufficient strength was not left you, so as to enable you occasionally to drop a short word of exhortation from the pulpit, or among the Lord's more immediate people, at the solemn time of your communion: nor could a short but solemn word of prayer have been more injurious to you in the house of God, than in your own dwelling,—nor would it have been a greater exertion to have entered into occasional conversation with your communicants; and as you are by no means advanced in age, you are not to conclude that your present weakness is to last for life. If even much caution might have been found necessary, yet surely a relinquishment of your office altogether is quite another story. If all the physicians in the world were

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Often was he severely blamed by the high doctrinalists, because he did not preach to the elect only. "I don't know them," he would say, "or I would preach to them. Have the goodness to mark them with a bit of chalk, and then I'll talk to them. If it is not right to preach to sinners, to whom am I to preach?—for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

He was a most strenuous supporter of the law, as a *rule* of life, and always enforced it in opposition to the Antinomian view of the subject. "I follow the law," said he, "*from* the life within me, not *for* life,—and, blessed be God, which of the Divine commands do I wish to be without?—Do I wish for any other God than He who is reconciled to me in Christ Jesus? Can I desire to fall down before any other footstool than his? Can I love the Sabbath too much? Can I honour my beloved parents too much? Can I object to abstain from those things which my heavenly Father knows will injure me?"

On one occasion, after speaking about the Divine law, he suddenly burst forth into prayer, and exclaimed, "Blessed Lord, I do not wish thee to bring thy holy law down to the low

standard of my imperfections, but to raise my poor mind to the high standard of thy law."

In conversation with a friend, he was speaking upon the *extent* of the atonement. "I don't think," he said, "that Dr. Williams has cleared away the difficulties on this subject. Those who hold the limited scheme say, 'Only those who are elected to eternal life *can* come to Christ.' On the other hand, the Calvinist who agrees with Dr. Williams admits, 'that only the elect *will* come.' However, I love to look at the atonement as a glorious plan, which enables the Father, consistently with all his glorious attributes, 'to be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.' The Saviour said, 'All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.'"

In his sermons he always drew a clear distinction between the *purposes* of God, and their accomplishment in the complete justification, sanctification, and glorification of a believer. The purpose was in eternity, but the act in time. He, therefore, strongly objected to the terms, "eternal justification, and eternal sanctification." When conversing on these points during the dinner hour, on helping a

friend, he remarked, "There, now, you have been eating that mutton from all eternity." At that moment there was a knock at the dining-room door. "Dear me, that knocking has been from all eternity. Just as foolish," he added, "is it to talk about eternal justification, and eternal sanctification." At the same time Mr. Hill always admitted that these doctrines, though distinct in themselves, were inseparably connected in the believer. We cannot be justified without being sanctified. He was once preaching on this subject, when he thus concluded his remarks, "A person once asked a dear little child this improper question, 'Who do you love best, your father or your mother?' The child paused for a moment, and then exclaimed, 'I love them *both* best. Now, if you ask me which I love best, justification or sanctification, I will answer with the little child, and never mind the bad grammar, 'I love them both best.'"

In order to shew the difference between the power and the disposition, or will of a Christian, to do that which is evil, he would thus combat the errors of Antinomianism. "Some professors justify their sins by referring to the text, 'It is not I, but sin that dwelleth in me.' Now, it is

true, I have power to put my hand into the fire and burn it, but I have not the will to do it. I have power to get drunk, but I have not the will to do it. So it is with the new-born soul. He has power to sin, but his renewed will cannot consent to it. It is contrary to the lovely nature implanted in him by the power of the Holy Spirit."

He also remarked in one of his last sermons, "The disciples had no will to go from Christ, for He had previously given them a better will to come to him. A man cannot have a will to come to him, and to go from him at the same time. I cannot have a will to do two contrary things in the same way. If I have a will to come to Christ, I have a will to fly from myself and all my corruptions."

The great and constant themes of Mr. Hill's successful ministry were in strict agreement with his own remark, "A preacher has but three subjects—ruin, redemption, and regeneration. These are the doctrines which humble the sinner, exalt the Saviour, and promote holiness."*

He freely invited the sinner to seek for the blessings of salvation, and dwelt much on the

* First Journal, p. 178.

office; for the promise is not made to the successful preacher, but to him who has fully made known the whole counsel of God. "Be thou *faithful* unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." There are many devoted men, who have frequently exclaimed with the prophet, "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought." Let not the faithful labourer despond, since the inspired and evangelical prophet sometimes "walked in darkness, and had no light." It is an encouraging thought to know that "our judgment is with the Lord, and our work with our God." Success cheers us in the path of duty, but "though Israel be not gathered, yet shall the faithful preacher be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and his God shall be his strength."

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this occasion that he indulged in many severe but well-sustained remarks on the efforts of the Unitarians to darken this part of the counsel of God, by false translations of the sacred text. He enforced the truth by trite and simple illustrations. He shewed, by analogy of reasoning, how impossible it is for man's poor and depraved reason fully to comprehend his own nature, and would, with peculiar feeling quote the well-known lines,

> "Where reason fails with all her powers,
> There faith prevails, and love adores."

There was also a little anecdote he sometimes introduced.—"A Socinian once wrote on the fly-leaf of a Bible belonging to a young person, 'Can you find me the word Trinity in the Holy Scriptures?' Now, we know," remarked the preacher, "the word is not to be found,—but the doctrine signified by the term we employ is most abundantly and gloriously revealed."

The Divine sovereignty was fully admitted by Mr. Hill, but he held the doctrine in strict connexion with the personal responsibility of man. He believed both these truths, not because he could reconcile them, but because he found

them in his Bible. He constantly and fully proclaimed the universal depravity of man, and no one more completely humbled the sinner than he did. He not only "leaned towards the tenets of Calvin,"* but he was a Calvinist. He believed the doctrine of election, but rejected altogether the notion, that the election of some to eternal life necessarily implied the reprobation of others. "A king may spare twenty guilty condemned criminals out of forty; this election of the twenty does not make the others criminals,—they were so before. The king only left them where he found them: so it is with the sinner." Election to eternal life he held to be true, but not so as to prevent the most enlarged invitations to sinners to repent, and believe the Gospel. In connexion with these truths he believed in the effectual calling of the saints, and their final perseverance to eternal life. On the latter point his sentiments were in strict harmony with the text, "He that endureth to the end—the same shall be saved." He frequently repeated the remark, "I can only prove my *perseverance* by my *persevering*."

* See his Life, by Sidney, p. 412; and Village Dialogues, vol. iii. p. 141 and 269.

"Her unbelieving husband would say, 'I don't know much about religion myself,—but this I know, that it has done my wife a vast deal of good.'" On this, and other subjects, how frequently would he exclaim, "Oh, the delicacy, the beautiful delicacy of the Gospel; it commands me not only to abstain from evil, but from its very appearance!"

Mr. Hill hearing a whisper that a minister behaved with unkindness towards his wife, although he talked vastly well in the pulpit, determined to make a morning call on him, and took a young unmarried minister with him in his carriage. Arrived at the minister's door, he apologized for not alighting, on account of increasing feebleness. The minister and his lady soon made their appearance. To the latter the venerable man paid the most respectful attention, but there was a dignified reserve towards the husband. He addressed his conversation to the lady, and mentioned to his young companion, how he ought to conduct himself to his wife, should he ever be blessed with such a helpmate. His remarks were delivered in a soft, subdued tone; but they produced the desired effect upon the silent husband. When the carriage moved away, the old gentleman,

rubbing his chin, with a sarcastic look, intimated how effectually he had lectured the bad-tempered husband.

When enforcing the importance of constant watchfulness over our spirits, he related the following fact,—

"I once took tea with a lady, who was very particular about her china. The servant, unfortunately, broke the best bread-and-butter plate; but her mistress took very little notice of the circumstance at the time, only remarking, 'Never mind, Mary, never mind, accidents cannot be prevented.' 'I shall have it by and by,' said the servant, when she got out of the room; and so it turned out. 'The good woman's temper,' said Mr. Hill, 'was corked up for a season, but it came out with terrible vengeance when the company retired.'"

It has been stated that many years since Mr. Hill was preaching for a public charity, when a note was handed to him in the pulpit, inquiring, "If it would be right for a bankrupt to contribute to the collection?" He referred to the inquiry, and answered it firmly in the negative. He then added, "But, my friends, I would advise you who are not insolvent, not to

pass the plate this evening, as the people will be sure to say, 'There goes the bankrupt!'"

He was once preaching for the Missionary Society, in Somersetshire, when a learned Doctor was present, who had compounded with his creditors. Mr. Hill pleaded hard for the cause, but added, "Mind, I don't want you that have not paid twenty shillings in the pound to give, you had better go and pay your creditors first."

Mr. Hill occasionally referred to the following reproof which he gave to an unholy member of a Christian church,—

"A lady who professed the religion of the Saviour, but whose daily practice was not in harmony with it, once said to him, 'Oh! I am *afraid* lest after all I should not be saved.' "I'm glad to hear you say so," replied Mr. Hill, "for I have long been afraid for you, I assure you." The lady instantly retired.

The following incident was mentioned from the pulpit,—"I once met with an antinomian professor, in Gloucestershire, who told me, that he should never doubt any more. I said to him, If you have done doubting for yourself, give me leave to doubt for you. We do

not doubt for those who want more grace, and are anxious to get nearer to God; but we doubt for those who live regardless of the precepts of the Bible."

Mr. Hill frequently urged upon his people, to "owe no man anything." He would say, "I never pay my debts; and for the best of all reasons, because I never have any debts to pay." In speaking to tradesmen, he would say, "You are sometimes more in the path of duty in looking into your ledgers, than into your Bibles; all things should be done decently, and in order."

The right discharge of relative duties was a subject on which Mr. Hill sometimes dwelt. He would most affectionately press upon his people the great importance of a holy example before children. On one occasion, when referring to the bad conduct of the children of some professors, he said, "Through a long life I have invariably noticed, that when such children turn out improperly, you may trace a defect in the religious character of one, or both, of the parents. If the father is a godly man, the wife may have much of the world about her; or, when the mother is wholly devoted to God, the children may see a want of co-operation

in the father in advancing the mother's plans." The more this remark is examined, the more it will be found to be correct. How important, then, is it for Christian parents to walk together "as becometh saints." "We should chastise our children," he observes, "as the Lord corrects his, never in wrath, but always in mercy. Every stripe given by an angry hand, from a revengeful heart, only increases the evil for which the child is so unwisely and unworthily corrected."* "To oppose the volatile disposition, is to oppose nature itself; it rather needs regulation than reproof: we should, therefore, first please, that we may afterwards profit. Though a child should be allowed to be innocently gay, yet all these little gaieties may need a mild control. Parents must first be beloved, before they can be obeyed, unless by terror, which only excites the obedience of vile servility, and which consequently creates detestation; when from the fear of these things the mind is emancipated, the worst of consequences must ensue from such an ill-judged education."†

* Village Dialogues IX.

† Token of Love for Children.

All his faithful instructions were delivered with great affection. His appeals were often accompanied with tears. He always loved to hear a minister in earnest about the soul, and divine things, without which he felt assured that he would not do much good. "Every real Christian minister," he remarks, "should spend till he be spent in the sacred work. How do lawyers plead at the bar? and how do players act their part? The lawyer pleads the cause, which is merely temporary, and the player sets off the cause that is entirely imaginary. Are the ministers of God, therefore, who are engaged about matters that are eternal, to give us nothing but a little unmeaning, heathenish morality by way of a sermon?"

Mr. Hill was not only faithful, but beautifully scriptural in all his ministrations. His mind was well stored with the language of the Bible, though he was not always literally correct in his quotations of the sacred text. The holy volume was an exceedingly precious book to him, and to its arbitration all matters were referred; the law and the testimony terminated all strife, in his mind.

"There are some texts of Scripture," he observed, "that seem to contain the whole

Bible in a few words. "Where is the beginning, and where is the end of that text, 'Christ is all in all?' It contains all the Bible in one sentence. Christ is 'the one thing needful;' here again is the Bible in a few words. 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,' is another beautiful text of the same kind."

The excellent man had a manner peculiarly his own, when he quoted his favourite passages, which it is difficult to describe. It was the evident sincerity of his soul, in the expressions he made use of, that impressed his remarks on the minds of his hearers. "I once preached," he remarked, "from that fine prayer of the apostle Paul, Eph. iii. 16—19. Mark that prayer: 'Who can tell the worth of a Bible, if it were only for the sake of those four verses! Who can describe the blessedness of the man who feels and enjoys its sacred contents.'"*

When pointing out to Christians the glory of their final victory, he would exclaim, "Oh that fine hyperbole of St. Paul's, 'We are *more* than conquerors through him that loved us.' *More* than conquerors, beloved, why, what can that mean? Nelson was *a* conqueror, Welling-

* First Journal, p. 49.

ton was *a* conqueror,—but they were not more than conquerors; and yet the apostle tells us that the poor believer is *more* than a conqueror, through Him that loved him."

"The apostle," said he, "was very bold in his language on one occasion: 'I can do all things.' Is this correct? '*I* can do all things?' Let us see how he goes on, 'through Christ who strengtheneth me." Ah! that is the point. A poor saint can do all things through Christ; but nothing without him."

Mr. Hill was peculiarly happy in his simple application of texts, of which the following are illustrations:—

"Christians, did you ever notice children at their play. When they have their little quarrels, how soon they make them up, and how lovingly they go on together again. What a wise remark is that of the apostle, 'In *malice* be ye children.'"

When commenting on the Old Testament Scriptures, Mr. Hill would sometimes, in imitation of Mr. Romaine, say, that he loved "the Gospel according to Leviticus." When he expounded these parts of Scripture, his hearers felt that the testimony of Jesus was indeed the

spirit of prophecy, and the *substance* of the Old Testament records.

He beautifully embodied the types of the Old Testament. The following is an instance:

"The blood of the lamb that was to be slain by the Israelites in Egypt, was to be sprinkled on the door-posts of the houses, and on the lintel, but not on the threshold. We are not to trample on the blood of Christ, but are to look at it as a security from the death and condemnation which, as sinners, we deserve from God."

To all the graces of the Holy Spirit he would refer with great beauty, particularly love, meekness, and humility. On the subject of repentance he once said, "Oh! repentance, thou art my sweetest companion in the wilderness; but thou wilt only go with me to the gates of heaven. I sometimes think that if I may be permitted to drop one tear, when I enter my heavenly Father's mansion, it will be when I say—farewell, lovely companion, repentance."

A similar idea is found in a sermon he preached not long before he died. He traced St. Paul into the kingdom of heaven, and

thought that when he stood before the Lamb that was slain, and saw his glory, he would wish to weep for a moment, on recollecting that he had once been the persecutor of such a Saviour.

When he had been dwelling on the great and mysterious subjects connected with the Gospel, he would often add, after many appropriate remarks, "But I cannot reach those lofty themes with the poor little pigmy powers of *my* mind; and after all my efforts I am compelled to say, in the language of holy Paul, 'Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!'"

The faithful and affectionate appeals of Mr. Hill were very successful, but the extent of his usefulness will not be known till the last great day: a few facts, however, may be given.

During his itinerant labours, many hundreds were led to Christ. He was not only the means of calling the poor profligate sinner to repentance, but ministers were awakened under his sermons. The writer attended a missionary prayer-meeting with Mr. Hill, about twelve years before his death, and walked home

with him. In our way, he called on the pious rector of one of the parishes in Southwark. He apologized for his late visit; "But," said he, "I did not wish to pass without saying, 'How do you do?'" The interview was brief, but interesting. The devoted clergyman was led to Christ through Mr. Hill's instrumentality. Another young man, who went to Surrey Chapel to have a "a little fun," took his place in the gallery. There the Spirit of God applied the word with power, and he afterwards became a regular supply at the chapel. During the time that great political excitement prevailed in London, when Mr. Pitt was premier, a member of one of the corresponding societies, and a disciple of Paine's, was attracted to the chapel by the excellency of the organ. He heard the word, and the arrow shot at a venture entered his heart. He became an eminently devoted Christian, the secretary of one of the leading societies connected with the chapel, and most attached to his beloved minister. His former companions having missed him from their club, called, and inquired after him: "My views of reform," said the good man, "have undergone

a change,—I once thought it my duty to try and reform others; now, I think that the best plan is to begin reformation at *home*, — and when that work is effectually done, then to try and reform my neighbours."

Mr. Griffin, in his funeral sermon for Mr. Hill, mentions that he once preached in a field at Portsea, to a considerable audience, from the text, "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Four persons were afterwards admitted to church membership, one of whom is now a deacon, who attributed their conversion to God to that very sermon."

Soon after the formation of the London Itinerant Society, in which Mr. Hill always took a deep interest, Mr. Densham became one of its most active members, and was the principal instrument of introducing the Gospel into many villages around the metropolis. This truly devoted man Mr. Hill numbered among "the worthies" of his church, and frequently, when appealing to the young, mentioned the character of "dear Mr. Densham."

This pious young man was providentially directed to Bow Church, Cheapside, in the year 1791, when the excellent Mr. Abdy, of St.

John's, Horslydown,* preached a sermon on prayer, which was blessed to his soul in a peculiar manner. The words which impressed his mind were: "A prayerless soul is a Christless soul, and a Christless soul is a hopeless soul." Some time after this, he resided near Surrey Chapel, and heard Mr. Hill. Finding his ministry much blessed to his soul, he joined in communion with him, and experienced such nearness to God, that for about two years he enjoyed heaven upon earth. His closet was truly his heaven; and he fully expected that God would soon take him up to be with him for ever.

This worthy person was afterwards settled at Petersfield, in Hampshire, where he was engaged "in labours more abundant," and secured the affections of his pastor, by his noble courage, in preaching Christ crucified amidst the showers of stones and filth that were cast upon him.

On the 25th of July, Mr. Densham had appointed to meet the Rev. Mr. Wilks, at

* It is stated that this excellent rector received his first spiritual light from a sermon preached by Mr. Hill, in St. Thomas's Church, in the Borough.

Hazlemere, to consult about the purchase of a piece of ground, and the erection of a new chapel there. He set off in the morning, in a single-horse chaise, accompanied by one of his congregation, with whom he began a very animated conversation about eternal things; after which he proposed singing a hymn. They sung together the sixty-fifth hymn of the second book of Dr. Watts:

"When I can read my title clear,
To mansions in the skies,
I bid farewell to every fear,
And wipe my weeping eyes, &c."

and afterwards began the seventeenth of the first book,—

"Oh for an overcoming faith,
To cheer my dying hours,
To triumph o'er that monster, death,
And all his frightful powers!"

Just as the verse was concluded, and near Fareham, part of the harness broke, and the horse ran violently down the hill leading to Hazlemere, but having turned the corner of the inn-yard without oversetting the chaise, it was supposed that the danger was over, and the bitterness of death past. The horse, how-

ever, had scarcely reached the top of the yard, when the chaise was overturned, and Mr. Densham received a violent blow against the stable, and was taken up speechless. Medical help was instantly procured; and every possible means made use of in vain. A considerable contusion was discovered on the head. He revived a little, but was insensible; and on the morning of the following day he entered into the rest that remaineth for the people of God, in the thirty-sixth year of his age.

There were two other pleasing facts of conversion, which the pastor was fond of mentioning with the tender feelings of a spiritual parent:—

"I was much pleased some years ago," he remarked, "when a poor youth came to this chapel, to hear, as he afterwards told me, a man who was looked upon as being 'out of the common way.' He loves to be out of the way, dear hearers, that he may catch sinners who are out of the way. This poor youth had been very depraved, but after hearing the sermon he went home broken-hearted, and said to his brother, 'O brother, if you had been where I have been to-day, you would have felt what I did. We have been very wicked. O come, and

near the man I have been hearing, and listen to what he has to say to your soul.' The brothers both came, 'and nobody can tell,' said the youth to me, 'the joyous feelings of my heart, when I looked into my brother's face, and saw the penitential tears begin to trickle down." These young men became devoted servants of Christ, and were numbered by the pastor among his "worthies," whom he delighted often to refer to, as among his crowns of rejoicing before the Lord.

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The Rev. Mr. Pratman, of Barnard Castle, once breakfasted with the excellent John Newton, of London, when the conversation turned on the usefulness of Mr. Hill as a preacher. Mr. Newton stated, that he knew, as a fact, that Mr. Hill once preached a solemn awakening sermon, for a Baptist minister, who afterwards received into the church twelve persons, as the fruits of that sermon."

Mr. Hill occasionally preached to soldiers and sailors, when he could collect them together. Mr. Griffin, in his funeral sermon, relates the following interesting fact:—

"In the early period of his ministry, when visiting one of our seaport towns, where he attempted to preach in the open air, he was so interrupted by noise and missiles, that it was impossible, for a time, to proceed. He was on horseback, and his footman with him. Instead of attempting to preach, he had recourse to an innocent stratagem. Addressing himself to the people, he said, 'My lads, I have no right over you; if you do not choose to hear me, I have no authority to force your attention; but I have travelled some miles for the sake of doing or receiving good; I have, therefore, a proposal to make to you. I always did admire British

sailors. I see here some able-bodied seamen: some of you, no doubt, have seen a great deal of service, and been in many a storm, and some in dangerous shipwrecks. Now, as I am very fond of hearing the adventures of seamen, my proposal is, that some of you, and, as many as you please in turn, shall stand up, and tell us what you have seen and suffered, and what dangers you have escaped; and I will sit and hear you out, upon this condition,—that you agree to hear me afterwards.' This proposal made many of them laugh heartily, and they said one to another, 'Do you stand up, and give us a lecture.' One called upon a talkative sailor by name, 'I say, Harry,—do you give him a lecture,' which produced a loud burst of laughter through the whole crowd; and Mr. Hill, to keep them in good humour, laughed with them. After waiting some time, Mr. Hill said, 'Will none of you take my proposal?' None being disposed to do so, he said, 'I am a clergyman—I came, not long since, from the University of Cambridge. If you had heard me, I should have told you nothing but what is in the Bible or Prayer Book. I will tell you what I intended to say to you, if you had heard me quietly.' And then beginning with a decla-

ration of the grace and compassion of Christ, in dying to save all penitent sinners, he led them to the consideration of the thief on the cross; and then to the character and circumstances of the prodigal son, and the compassion of his father. His description of what he *meant* to have said, was so interesting and affecting, that he riveted their attention, and produced an evident change in their disposition towards him. While he was speaking they drew gradually nearer, hanging, as is the practice of sailors, when standing in a crowd, upon each others' shoulders. In this position they listened, with almost death-like silence, till he had finished telling them what he should have said, if they had been willing to hear him. He then took off his hat, made them a bow, and thanked them for their civilities. Most of them took off their hats, and gave him three cheers: several vociferated, 'When will you come again, Sir?' And one man, who seemed like the champion of the whole, approached Mr. Hill, and said, 'If you will come again, Sir, I say no one shall hurt a hair of your head, if I am on shore.' Mr. Hill promised that he would visit them again, as soon as other engagements would permit. There are now, in that town and

neighbourhood, several places of worship; and it is as quiet and orderly a seaport as any in the kingdom."

The impressions frequently produced by Mr. Hill's "wild-fire," as some persons termed his eccentric sallies, formed a remarkable feature in his ministry. His homely illustrations often contained the most important principles, and carried direct conviction to the heart, even when fortified within the entrenchments of scepticism. Several instances of this kind are in the recollection of those who regularly attended the ministrations of Mr. Hill. About twelve years before his decease, he was far from happy in his discourse one Sabbath evening. His mind appeared unable to grasp his subject. After many common-place and unconnected observations, he exclaimed, "Some of you may think that I am preaching a rambling sermon; but, oh! if I should be able to reach the heart of a poor rambling sinner, you will forgive me.—Sinner, you may ramble from Christ, but we will ramble after you, and try and bring you back into his fold." At the moment these remarks were made, a pickpocket entered the chapel. These words powerfully struck his mind, and he went home deeply affected. He brought

forth fruit meet for repentance, by destroying a variety of illegal articles he had prepared for circulation. He had several interviews with Mr. Hill, who entertained a firm hope that he was truly converted to God. The good pastor furnished him with many useful household articles, and did all in his power to restore him to society.

Another equally interesting incident has lately been mentioned by a friend. About three years before the death of the venerable preacher, two gentlemen entered Surrey Chapel previous to the Sabbath evening service. The circumstances which led them to the place were peculiarly interesting. They had long been friends, but one of them was shortly to leave his country for India. He was living "without hope and without God in the world." His companion was a decided and consistent Christian, and earnestly desired his friend's salvation. This pious friend, as the time drew nigh for the young man's departure, begged of him to grant him one special favour, namely, to spend with him his four last Sabbath evenings, and to accompany him to the sanctuary of God. The request was complied with, and many prayers ascended to God, that the sermons might lead the wanderer

to the Saviour. The first, second, and third sermons were heard, but no impressions were produced. When the last Sabbath arrived, the Christian felt increased anxiety for his friend's soul. He took him to Surrey Chapel, to hear good Rowland Hill, and secretly prayed that the preacher might be in a solemn state of mind, and not be permitted to indulge in eccentric remarks. The venerable man gave out his text, "We are not ignorant of his devices;" and immediately told the following tale,—"Many years since, I met a drove of pigs in one of the streets of a large town, and to my surprise they were not driven, but quietly followed their leader. This singular fact excited my curiosity, and I pursued the swine, until they all quietly entered the butchery. I then asked the man how he succeeded in getting the poor, stupid, stubborn pigs so willingly to follow him; when he told me the secret: He had a basket of beans under his arm, and kept dropping them as he proceeded, and so secured his object. Ah! my dear hearers, the devil has got his basket of beans, and he knows how to suit his temptations to every sinner. He drops them by the way,—the poor sinner is thus led captive by the devil at his own will; and if the grace of

God prevent not, he will get him at last into his butchery, and there he will keep him for ever. Oh, it is because 'we are not ignorant of his devices,' that we are anxious this evening to guard you against them!"

The Christian friend deeply mourned over this tale about the pigs, and feared it would excite a smile, but not produce conviction in the mind of his unbelieving companion. After the service was over, they left the chapel, and all was silence for a season. "What a singular statement we had to-night about the pigs, and yet how striking and convincing it was!" remarked the young man. His mind was impressed,—he could not forget the basket of beans—the butchery—and the final loss of the sinner's soul. He left this country, but has since corresponded with his friend, and continues to refer to this sermon, as having produced a beneficial, and, it is hoped, an abiding impression on his mind.

What shall we say to these things? Surely, like Dean Milner, we must acknowledge, "'Tis this *slap-dash* preaching, say what they will, that does all the good."* But how can

† Sidney's Life of Hill, p. 96.

these effects be accounted for? The mind of the sinner is habitually closed against the truth. He hears as though he heard not. His soul is often absent from the sanctuary, when his body is present. The demon of unbelief reigns in his mind, and every avenue through which the truth can enter, is securely kept. The eccentric illustration excites the wandering spirit, disturbs its dreadful apathy, and secures a momentary attention, when the truth contained in the homely comparison flashes into the mind, and the understanding of the sinner becomes enlightened. Through such means the Holy Spirit often works, and seals conviction on the soul. Let every preacher use his *own* talent, and God will not permit him to labour in vain. The reader will remember the reply of the Bishop, before whom a complaint was exhibited against Mr. Rogers, of Dedham. "Ah! say not anything against good Mr. Rogers,—he charms more souls to Christ by his wild notes, than we do by our set music."

Sometimes years rolled away before Mr. Hill heard of the results of his ministry. The following interesting statement has been recorded by an intimate friend and fellow-traveller in the

Redeemer's cause, who was with Mr. Hill on most of his Missionary tours:"*—

"Perhaps no man in modern times has been more honoured than Mr. Hill, as the instrument of converting souls,—his talent appeared more particularly in awakening the careless, instances of which the writer has had many opportunities of witnessing,—and he does not remember ever to have remained two days with Mr. Hill, in any town, without meeting with one person, or more, to whom his ministry had been made useful. One case, among many, he cannot omit:—

"After Mr. Hill had preached for the Missionary Society, in Princes-street Chapel, Devonport, two tall, venerable-looking men, upwards of seventy years of age, appeared at the vestry door. After a short pause they entered, arm in arm, and advanced towards Mr. Hill, when one of them, with some degree of trepidation, inquired, 'Sir, will you permit two old sinners to have the honour to shake you by the hand?' He replied, with some reserve, 'Yes, Sir,' when one of the gentlemen took his hand, kissed it, bathed it with tears,

* Rev. Thomas Jackson.

and said, 'Sir, do you remember preaching on the spot where this chapel now stands, fifty years ago?' 'Yes, I do,' was the reply. The old man then proceeded to say, 'O Sir, never can the dear friend who has hold of my arm, or myself, forget that sermon. We were then two careless young men in his Majesty's Dock-yard, posting to destruction as fast as time and sin could convey us thither. Having heard that a young clergyman was to preach out of doors, we determined to go and have some fun,—we loaded our pockets with stones, intending to pelt you; but, Sir, when you arrived, our courage failed, and as soon as you engaged in prayer, we were so deeply impressed, that we looked at each other, and trembled. When you named your text, and began to speak, the word came with power to our hearts; the tears rolled down our cheeks; we put our hands into our pockets, and dropped the stones one after another, until they were all gone; for God had taken away the stone from our hearts. When the service was over we retired, but our hearts were too full to speak, until we came near to our lodgings, when my friend at my elbow said, 'John, this will not do; we are both wrong,—good

night.' This was all he could utter, he retired to his apartment,—I to mine; but neither of us dared to go to bed, lest we should awake in hell. From that time, Sir, we humbly hope we were converted to God, who, of his infinite mercy, has kept us in his ways to the present moment. We thought, Sir, if you would permit us, after the lapse of half a hundred years, to have the pleasure of shaking you by the hand before we go home, it would be the greatest honour that could be conferred on us.' Mr. Hill was deeply affected,—the tears rolled down his venerable cheeks in quick succession; he fell on the necks of the old men, quite in the patriarchal style; and there you might have seen them, locked in each other's arms, weeping tears of holy joy and gratitude before the Father of mercies. The writer is aware he cannot do justice to the scene, though he feels, at this distance of time, something like celestial pleasure in recording what he witnessed."

Mr. Hill was a very efficient advocate in all benevolent objects. The largest collections in England for the Patriotic Fund, and the German Sufferers, were obtained at Surrey Chapel. In 1793, when a powerful appeal was made for the distressed weavers in Spitalfields, sermons

were preached in many of the churches and chapels. In this good work Mr. Hill was forward, and at Surrey Chapel he procured the sum of £220. 17s. 6d., being by far the largest collection made. He was equally successful for the cause of Missions. He had a manner peculiarly his own in speaking to his people,—and seldom went too far for them. On announcing the amount of a liberal collection, he remarked, 'You have behaved so well on this occasion, that we mean to let you have another collection next Sunday. I have heard it said of a good cow—that the more you milk her, the more she will give.' On another occasion he mentioned the amount given at the Missionary collection, which was nearly £500, and then gave out his text, 'Take heed and beware of covetousness.' He told his people that the heart was very deceitful, and, though they had done well, they were not to suppose that they had done enough.'"

These recollections of Mr. Hill's ministry cannot properly be closed, without admitting that he was not a perfect preacher,—but where can we find one? He possessed considerable eccentricity, which sometimes led him to forget the gravity which became the pulpit. Had not

forth fruit meet for repentance, by destroying a variety of illegal articles he had prepared for circulation. He had several interviews with Mr. Hill, who entertained a firm hope that he was truly converted to God. The good pastor furnished him with many useful household articles, and did all in his power to restore him to society.

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"I was much pleased some years ago," he remarked, "when a poor youth came to this chapel, to hear, as he afterwards told me, a man who was looked upon as being 'out of the common way.' He loves to be out of the way, dear hearers, that he may catch sinners who are out of the way. This poor youth had been very depraved, but after hearing the sermon he went home broken-hearted, and said to his brother, 'O brother, if you had been where I have been to-day, you would have felt what I did. We have been very wicked. O come, and

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The situation in which Mr. Hill moved prevented him from being able fully to sympathize, as a preacher, with the poor and afflicted of his flock. He had, for many years, passed through an even and pleasant path. The cross he had to bear at the close of life was light. His sermons, therefore, were not always richly laden with experimental observations.

A poor member, after hearing the pastor endeavour to comfort the saint who knew not where to obtain the next meal, remarked, "I think I could preach better on that point than our dear minister. I have *felt* what it has been to be nearly destitute of food for several days together. I have heard the cries of hungry children, piercing me to the very soul." However high the attainments of a preacher may be, it is "the furnace of affliction" alone, that will enable him, from deep sympathy of spirit, to "weep with those that weep," and fully to administer to 'the bruised reed' the rich supports of the Gospel of grace."

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Redeemer's cause, who was with Mr. Hill on most of his Missionary tours:"*—

"Perhaps no man in modern times has been more honoured than Mr. Hill, as the instrument of converting souls,—his talent appeared more particularly in awakening the careless, instances of which the writer has had many opportunities of witnessing,—and he does not remember ever to have remained two days with Mr. Hill, in any town, without meeting with one person, or more, to whom his ministry had been made useful. One case, among many, he cannot omit:—

"After Mr. Hill had preached for the Missionary Society, in Princes-street Chapel, Devonport, two tall, venerable-looking men, upwards of seventy years of age, appeared at the vestry door. After a short pause they entered, arm in arm, and advanced towards Mr. Hill, when one of them, with some degree of trepidation, inquired, 'Sir, will you permit two old sinners to have the honour to shake you by the hand?' He replied, with some reserve, 'Yes, Sir,' when one of the gentlemen took his hand, kissed it, bathed it with tears,

* Rev. Thomas Jackson.

and said, 'Sir, do you remember preaching on the spot where this chapel now stands, fifty years ago?' 'Yes, I do,' was the reply. The old man then proceeded to say, 'O Sir, never can the dear friend who has hold of my arm, or myself, forget that sermon. We were then two careless young men in his Majesty's Dock-yard, posting to destruction as fast as time and sin could convey us thither. Having heard that a young clergyman was to preach out of doors, we determined to go and have some fun,—we loaded our pockets with stones, intending to pelt you; but, Sir, when you arrived, our courage failed, and as soon as you engaged in prayer, we were so deeply impressed, that we looked at each other, and trembled. When you named your text, and began to speak, the word came with power to our hearts; the tears rolled down our cheeks; we put our hands into our pockets, and dropped the stones one after another, until they were all gone; for God had taken away the stone from our hearts. When the service was over we retired, but our hearts were too full to speak, until we came near to our lodgings, when my friend at my elbow said, 'John, this will not do; we are both wrong,—good

look at the clock, and say, "I see your time will not permit me to go through the subject, perhaps we may resume it on the next Sabbath.

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"To Rev. Mr. Bull,
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blessed be his name, it makes a little heaven there. You cannot too frequently present to God that most solemn prayer, 'Thy kingdom come.' Oh! that lovely kingdom, that is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, the kingdom of God, which is Christ within us the hope of glory, a kingdom which rules over every passion of the mind, and brings us into holy subjection to the Lord."

He remarked in another of his sermons, "Though some people may have been a little out of the way in talking about Christ's temporal reign on earth, we shall none of us be out of the way in talking about his spiritual reign in our hearts."

He seldom, therefore, "sounded a trumpet, or poured out a vial of wrath, or broke the mystic seals," before his people. He confined himself to the great doctrinal and practical truths of the Bible, believing that they would build up the saint in his holy faith, and lead the wandering sinner to the Divine Redeemer as his only hope of salvation.

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loose." This was enough for the learned female theologian, and she immediately decamped. "I love to answer a fool according to her folly," said Mr. Hill; and there the matter ended.

On another occasion, a gentleman versed in the prophecies called, and requested an interview, which was granted. He gave many reasons for believing that the Saviour would personally reign at Jerusalem. "Do you know, sir, the name of the street in which he will reside?" inquired Mr. Hill. "Why do you ask that question?" "Because his personal presence at Jerusalem will do me no good, unless I am with him." This gentleman was unable to make a convert of the good man, and he soon gave up the work in despair.

In April, 1832, he remarked in his morning sermon, "There is much assurance in the present day in those who follow the whimsies of these times. Some people talk of having the gift of tongues; others pretend to be wise above the things that are written, and can understand prophecy in a wonderful manner. I will only go so far as the sacred book has directed me, and look and wait with reverence for the time to come. I am sure of one thing, it is of little

use to have tongues, unless you have the gift of the Holy Spirit to teach you how to manage them."*

It will be seen that our venerable friend wandered not from the great truths which he preached during an unusually long ministry. He was mercifully kept by the power of God through numerous dangers, and could look back upon many that once ran well, but, wishing to be wise above that which is revealed, and having fed their people with fanciful novelties, instead of "the sincere milk of the word," had made awful shipwreck of faith and a pure conscience. It is well to be daily reminded, that "secret things belong to God; but those which are revealed, to us and to our children."

The incessant preaching engagements of Mr. Hill, and the number of members in his church, which amounted at one time to nearly 800, prevented him from efficiently discharging pastoral duties; but he did what he could, and the poor and afflicted were not overlooked by

* See "Fifteen Sermons on Important Subjects, by the Rev. Rowland Hill," published by Bennett; they are fair specimens of the preacher's style in his latter years, and his remarks are given with considerable accuracy.

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A poor member, after hearing the pastor endeavour to comfort the saint who knew not where to obtain the next meal, remarked, "I think I could preach better on that point than our dear minister. I have *felt* what it has been to be nearly destitute of food for several days together. I have heard the cries of hungry children, piercing me to the very soul." However high the attainments of a preacher may be, it is "the furnace of affliction" alone, that will enable him, from deep sympathy of spirit, to "weep with those that weep," and fully to administer to 'the bruised reed' the rich supports of the Gospel of grace."

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blessed be his name, it makes a little heaven there. You cannot too frequently present to God that most solemn prayer, 'Thy kingdom come.' Oh! that lovely kingdom, that is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, the kingdom of God, which is Christ within us the hope of glory, a kingdom which rules over every passion of the mind, and brings us into holy subjection to the Lord."

He remarked in another of his sermons, "Though some people may have been a little out of the way in talking about Christ's temporal reign on earth, we shall none of us be out of the way in talking about his spiritual reign in our hearts."

He seldom, therefore, "sounded a trumpet, or poured out a vial of wrath, or broke the mystic seals," before his people. He confined himself to the great doctrinal and practical truths of the Bible, believing that they would build up the saint in his holy faith, and lead the wandering sinner to the Divine Redeemer as his only hope of salvation.

In 1832 I called on him, and found him closeted with a respectable-looking female, who appeared about thirty years of age. I was retiring from the room, when Mr. Hill called

me back, and begged me to be seated. There was then a silence for several seconds, and I saw by an inexpressibly sly shrug, that my venerable friend had an unwelcome visitor. The lady, however, was not "slow to speak." The silence was soon broken by a few remarks which she directed to me. "Sir,—I have felt it my duty to call on this good old gentleman, and endeavour to explain to him some great truths of which he appears to be quite ignorant. I heard him preach yesterday, and was quite distressed to think the people should be so misled. I have been talking with him, but he does not appear to understand me. Poor gentleman, I suppose his mind is getting very weak." "Very weak indeed," said Mr. Hill. The female teacher then expounded to me her prophetical system, and inquired, "Do you understand me?" "No, madam, I do not." "Dear me, how dark are the minds of some of the Lord's children!" "There now!" exclaimed my friend, "you have got it." I did not attempt to answer the rhapsody of the lady, and received her lecture in humble silence. At length, Mr. Hill, in a loud whisper across the table, said, pointing his finger to his head, and looking towards his fair friend, "I think there's a screw

loose." This was enough for the learned female theologian, and she immediately decamped. "I love to answer a fool according to her folly," said Mr. Hill; and there the matter ended.

On another occasion, a gentleman versed in the prophecies called, and requested an interview, which was granted. He gave many reasons for believing that the Saviour would personally reign at Jerusalem. "Do you know, sir, the name of the street in which he will reside?" inquired Mr. Hill. "Why do you ask that question?" "Because his personal presence at Jerusalem will do me no good, unless I am with him." This gentleman was unable to make a convert of the good man, and he soon gave up the work in despair.

In April, 1832, he remarked in his morning sermon, "There is much assurance in the present day in those who follow the whimsies of these times. Some people talk of having the gift of tongues; others pretend to be wise above the things that are written, and can understand prophecy in a wonderful manner. I will only go so far as the sacred book has directed me, and look and wait with reverence for the time to come. I am sure of one thing, it is of little

use to have tongues, unless you have the gift of the Holy Spirit to teach you how to manage them."*

It will be seen that our venerable friend wandered not from the great truths which he preached during an unusually long ministry. He was mercifully kept by the power of God through numerous dangers, and could look back upon many that once ran well, but, wishing to be wise above that which is revealed, and having fed their people with fanciful novelties, instead of "the sincere milk of the word," had made awful shipwreck of faith and a pure conscience. It is well to be daily reminded, that "secret things belong to God; but those which are revealed, to us and to our children."

The incessant preaching engagements of Mr. Hill, and the number of members in his church, which amounted at one time to nearly 800, prevented him from efficiently discharging pastoral duties; but he did what he could, and the poor and afflicted were not overlooked by

* See "Fifteen Sermons on Important Subjects, by the Rev. Rowland Hill," published by Bennett; they are fair specimens of the preacher's style in his latter years, and his remarks are given with considerable accuracy.

him. He made frequent visits to the aged women who occupied the almshouses, and sometimes his patience was a little tried by their want of Christian contentment. No circumstance gave him greater satisfaction than to see the poor professor of religion an example to the world in all things. He would often say, "I love the remark, 'Cleanliness is next to godliness,' and *I* don't know how godliness and filthiness can dwell together." On another occasion, when speaking to the working classes, he said, "I don't think much of that man's religion who is without his Sunday coat, when a good Providence gives him plenty of work." There were some of the aged poor he loved to visit, and with them he held sweet communion. For one old member in particular, a woman of a fine understanding, who had well brought up her family, he felt a high Christian regard, and very frequently walked to her humble abode, to spend a short time in spiritual conversation and prayer. How delightful to see the baronet's son, and the uncle of the peer, and the popular preacher, thus finding it good "to condescend to persons of low estate." After these visits, in the next sermon he preached he would frequently refer to the remarks which had pleased

him. He took a very lively interest in the temporal and spiritual happiness of all his flock. Nothing, perhaps, afforded him a more innocent gratification than to be requested to marry his young people, for he was allowed for that purpose the use of the churches, where he was not permitted to preach. When these requests were made, the parties generally impressed on the old pastor's mind the necessity of secrecy. However, he was not long able to obey their wishes. The first person that called would have the question put to him, "Young —— is a pretty sort of lad. Do you know him? Have you heard the news? He's likely to get married." "To whom?" "Oh! I must not tell you." "When?" "Why, I'm requested to be at church on Wednesday;" and thus the intelligence would soon spread.

The numerous calls daily made on Mr. Hill were of a varied description. Some persons applied for situations under government, others wished to enter the army; many were anxious for the priest's office, that they might obtain a morsel of bread. He wisely dealt with all these applications. Like most other public men, he was occasionally troubled with anonymous letters, which he always treated with

merited contempt. He would at times refer to the reception of these communications from the pulpit, and then add the remark, "if you wish me to read your anonymous letters, you must always enclose a £5 note, in them for some good charity."

The kind pastor had one constant troubler for several years, a blind man, who was the fruit of his own ministry. He entered Surrey Chapel soon after its erection, with a heart full of opposition to the truth, but the sermon led him to the Saviour for mercy. The old man, who was a butcher, often related, that after his conversion he refused to have the theatrical bills exhibited in his shop. "Down went the devil's flags, and they never hung there again." The poor man became blind, and lived till his mind was imbecile. He was then anxious to become the poet laureat of the Evangelical Magazine. Every month he sent his dictated effusions to Mr. Hill for insertion. The good minister, wishing to please his old friend in his second childhood, used to take down a volume of the Magazine, and place the manuscript inside the leaves, and then tell the messenger who brought it, "Give my love to Mr. ——, and say I have put his verses into the Magazine."

He felt that there was no harm in thus innocently gratifying the aged poet.

At the close of Mr. Hill's winter residence at Surrey Chapel, he took an affectionate farewell of his people at the church meeting on the Monday evening previous to his departure for Wotton. During this last address, he furnished the particulars of his summer supplies. He would say, "I always like to get you the best preachers I can during my absence. You'll have good Mr. Jay, of Bath, and young Mr. Elliott, of Devizes. I hope dear Mr. Sibree, of Frome (ah, he's a good man) will be with you. Then there will be good Mr. Slatterie, and Mr. Griffin, and others—and may the Lord abundantly bless them all." In the latter years of his ministry he would say to his people, "My noisy Welshman will spend a few Sabbaths with you." At the close of the last service, Mr. Hill would get completely away from the people, if he could make his escape, but he was generally stopped in the vestry. With very deep emotions he would say, "I don't like these farewells," and would then take an affectionate leave of his friends. His diversified remarks to the aged and the young, the rich and the poor, were calculated to make

a lasting impression on the minds of all who were present. The pastor was *loved* by his people.

This sketch of the ministerial character of Mr. Hill cannot be concluded without noticing the disinterestedness of all his labours. Although the trustees of the chapel contributed towards the household charges at Surrey Chapel, yet Mr. Hill's expenditure went far beyond such allowance. He was able, by the kindness of Providence, to decline receiving a stated salary for his efficient services. He had in every sense "freely received, and therefore he freely gave." On this subject, Mr. Hill on one occasion felt himself called upon to state how this matter stood.

"If any one supposes," he remarks, "I am making a purse by my winter's residence at Surrey Chapel, they may be assured, that a considerable surplus is annually required out of my own private fortune to discharge all the demands that are upon me from day to day, from the situation I am called to fill.

"I have ever yet enjoyed the privilege of lending my aid to charitable institutions, and of making all my labours, when absent from

town, perfectly gratuitous, wherever I am called to serve. The tongue of unprovoked slander has called from me this vindication of myself."

In concluding this part of the narrative, we may apply the words of Scripture to Mr. Hill: "He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith; and much people were added to the Lord."

——————— Prompt at every call,
He watch'd and wept, he prayed and felt for all,
And, as a bird each fond endearment tries,
To tempt its new-fledg'd offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reprov'd each dull delay,
Allur'd to brighter worlds—and led the way."

CHAP. VII.

MR. HILL'S CHARACTER IN PRIVATE AND RELATIVE LIFE.

PERSONAL HOLINESS OF MR. HILL—THE INTOXICATED MINISTER—THE TALE OF THE WIG—MODERATION IN DIET—AMUSEMENTS—THE PROFESSOR OF RELIGION AT THE HORSE-RACES—SINGULAR REMARKS ON AMUSEMENTS—THE SAFE RULE—ANECDOTES ILLUSTRATING MR. HILL'S HUMILITY—HIS PRAYERFUL SPIRIT—HIS EXTENSIVE BENEVOLENCE—THE MISER—THE UNDERTAKER'S BILL—THE PIOUS CLERGYMAN—ILLUSTRATIONS OF MR. HILL'S READY AND POINTED WIT—THE REV. CORNELIUS WINTER—THE WET-NURSE—COMMON SENSE—THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH—THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A BENCH OF BISHOPS AND A BOARD OF MINISTERS—HIS OCCASIONAL DEPRESSION—THE POET COWPER—MR. HILL IN AFFLICTION—HIS GREAT LOVE FOR HIS RELATIVES—ST. JOHN'S "INNUMERABLES"—CHARACTER OF MRS. HILL—HER DEATH—EXTRACT FROM THE FUNERAL SERMON FOR ROUQUET—INTERESTING ANECDOTE—ORIGINAL LETTER—MR. HILL'S REFERENCE TO MRS. HILL'S DEATH—FAMILY LIVINGS—AFFECTIONATE AND LIBERAL CONDUCT OF MR. HILL TO HIS SERVANTS—GILES ARCHER—HIS DEATH—THE BILL OF EXCHANGE—MR. HILL'S ABSENCE OF MIND—THE BREAKFAST SCENE—THE SWEARING PARENT—HIS LOVE FOR ANIMALS—ORIGINAL LETTER—FALSE REPORTS—INTERESTING CONVERSATION WITH MR. AND MRS. HILL—SCRIPTURE BIOGRAPHY—REVIEW OF MR. HILL'S PRIVATE CHARACTER—ANECDOTE OF MR. HILL AND AN INSOLVENT—EXTRAVAGANT PRAISE—THE INDEPENDENT MINISTER—LEAMINGTON—THE BIGOT FOR LIBERALITY—ANECDOTE OF INTERVIEW WITH A CONGREGATIONALIST.

AN intimate acquaintance with Mr. Hill greatly endeared him to his friends. He was an epistle of Jesus Christ, known and read of all men, and few led a more holy and godly life. For eighty-

nine years he passed through the world without spot or blemish, and had the privilege of maintaining his great popularity to the last. His moral worth was the salt which preserved him in the changing scenes through which he passed. He would often say, "I can preach without my cassock, but not without my character." Personal holiness was the striking feature of his life,—and no one could cast a stone at him on this point. His soul was grieved at the failings of Christians,—and particularly of Christian ministers, whom he watched with great jealousy. He was once preaching for the Missionary Society, and was accompanied to the chapel by several ministers, and other Christian friends. After the service he returned home by water, and soon found, by the unhappy hilarity of one of the party, that all was not right. He said to his servant, in a loud voice, "Charles, when you see a parson drunk, don't talk about it, for you will injure the cause of religion; but whenever you see me drunk, tell all the world about it." The remark must have affected the guilty man, if he had reason enough left to understand it.

Our venerable friend took every opportunity of enforcing upon young ministers the great

importance of ministerial consistency, in their private and public conduct,—if they desired to be successful labourers in the vineyard. He once preached a sermon to the students belonging to one of the London dissenting colleges, in which he dwelt much on this topic, and gave them the following homely but convincing illustration.—"A pious man, having saved a little money, as a barber, thought he would leave the anxieties of business, and close his days in his native village. He retired, accordingly, but, to his great sorrow, he found the people destitute of the means of grace. After a little reflection, he determined to open his little cottage, for reading the Scriptures, and prayer. The attendance became encouraging, when the good man ventured to comment on a portion of Scripture,—then he read a sermon,—at length he began to preach boldly the unsearchable riches of Christ,—and eventually a neat chapel was built, and he was chosen the pastor by an affectionate people. In the course of a few years, another friend left the busy world, and settled in the same village. He became a liberal supporter of the place, and active in every good work, and was particularly attached to the worthy minister. As time rolled on, this

gentleman required a new wig, and he delicately hinted to the pastor, that, as his finances were low, perhaps he could occupy a few spare moments in preparing one, and so gain an honest penny. The proposal was agreed to,—the wig was made, and sent home. Alas, alas! it was a bad fit, and the charge exceedingly high. However, no notice was taken of the matter; but when the pastor prayed, his friend said to himself, 'A sweet prayer—but the wig!' Then, when with holy fervour the truths of the Gospel were enforced, the good man would say, 'We have had a good sermon,—but the wig!' Oh! (said Mr. Hill,) the wig spoiled every thing; it was the fly in the ointment.—Take care, my dear young friends, then, of the wig, throughout your ministerial course."

The good pastor was also anxious, by his example and precept, to impress upon the minds of young ministers the great importance of letting "their moderation be known unto all men," in their friendly intercourse with their people. He was careful to maintain this practice at his own table. He was liberal, but not prodigal, of the blessings of Providence. He was a remarkably small eater, and seldom allowed himself more than two glasses of wine

after his dinner. This practice he particularly followed when he was travelling for religious objects; for he had often witnessed the great evils which had followed from indiscretion on this point. Christians, and particularly Christian ministers, he considered should "abstain from the appearance of evil." Mr. Hill was an acute observer of men and things, in his extended intercourse with society. He often found that injudicious persons, who were most forward in pressing the good things of the world upon ministers, were the first to expose them, if they went beyond the bounds of strict moderation.

Religion made Mr. Hill an eminently happy man. He daily walked in paths of pleasantness and peace. There was generally the appearance of great cheerfulness in his countenance; sometimes he had the playfulness of a little child. He would strongly condemn all conformity to the customs of the world, though he never objected to the rational and innocent amusements of life. On this subject he remarks, "Did the world but know the pleasant conviviality and real affection the children of God enjoy with each other, they would never be surprised that we envy them not their mid-

night revel, nor wish to partake, with them, the cup of intoxication, or roar out like madmen the wretched song of the drunkard." He sometimes touched upon sinful amusements, and then told a tale of "a mighty fine professor of religion, who was once found at a horse-race. "Mercy on us," said a friend, "how came *you* here?" He meekly replied, "I merely came to witness the vanity of the world!!"

On the subject of lawful recreations there is an amusing passage in one of his publications, "I verily declare, it never would have hurt my conscience, had I possessed a living, to have made my steeple my observatory, the best window in my chancel the place for experiments in optics; nor would an electrical machine, in my esteem, have defiled even the communion-table itself. I should not have broken my ordination vows thereby, for these are not the studies of the world and the flesh; and had I invited a large circle of my intelligent parishioners to have beheld these displays of the Creator's glory, I should not have done the least injury to my conscience, for all this would have introduced a serious comment on the Scriptures themselves. 'How manifold are thy works, O Lord! in wisdom hast thou made them all.

The earth is full of thy goodness.' Nor would the solemn work of prayer itself have been an inconsistent conclusion, for the blessing of God on our truly innocent amusements."*

The safe rule Mr. Hill laid down for his people was, "Go to such places only where you can ask a blessing on your amusements, and you will never do amiss.†

Humility richly adorned the character of Mr. Hill, though he naturally possessed all the dignity of one of the English aristocracy. As a minister of Christ he was often humbled in the dust, on hearing of the success of his labours, and would feelingly exclaim, "Lord, I am an unprofitable servant." When he approached the footstool of mercy, and held communion with his heavenly Father, then he felt as "a worm, and no man."

Mr. Hill was once at the house of a lady, at Chatham, who had his portrait over her fire-place. She requested him, as a particular favour, to put his name at the back of the picture, which would greatly increase its value in her estimation. He complied, and wrote,

* Letter to Tattersall, p. 19.

† First Journal, p. 16.

"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."

The spirit of prayer appeared richly to rest on the mind of the holy man, in all public services. In private life you could not remain with him many minutes without hearing the language of supplication drop from his lips. He appeared fully to enter into the text, "Praying with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit." A frequent remark of his was, "There is a holy aptitude in the renewed soul to pray to God. Like the bird, it is no trial ever to be ready to take the wing;—a Christian is always prepared for heavenly communion." Much of Mr. Hill's time was passed in secret ejaculatory prayer, by which he frequently seemed to be near the eternal throne. In the devotions of the family he was brief, but exceedingly varied. He delighted to converse on the subject of the Christian's fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. Referring to his own feelings, when enjoying the happy privilege, he would exclaim,

"In secret silence of the mind,
My God, and there *my* heaven I find."

He greatly enjoyed the church service, and was always present while it was read. At times there was a want of due reverence in his manner in the pulpit, when repeating the Lord's prayer: his eyes would be open, and he would look about in various directions. He occasionally repeated, in his sermons, portions of the prayers, and the chapters for the day, "for the benefit of those who were too late for that interesting part of the holy worship of the sanctuary."

Benevolence was a striking feature in Mr. Hill's character. He had no love for money, and only valued it as the means of doing good, and obtaining the meat that perisheth. Such was the generosity of his nature, that he would have given away all that he possessed, had it not been for the kind and restraining influence which Mrs. Hill exercised over him. The Chapel-house was continually crowded by beggars, and seldom did a worthy person apply in vain. But he had a strong objection to a plan adopted by some ministers, of hawking about their own productions, which he thought only a genteel mode of begging. The writer was present one morning, when a minister called to inquire if Mr. Hill would keep the volume

of sermons he had left the preceding day. The old gentleman rose, and, returning the book, said with much apparent condescension, "Sir, you are very obliging to bring your sermons to me, but I have so many in my library which I have never read, that I do not need your excellent volume at present."

At the last interview which I ever had with my respected friend, he gave me a donation for a poor minister. He then, for the first time, intimated that he saved no part of his annual income, and that he thought that two-thirds of it were often devoted to charitable purposes. He daily practised his own advice, "Such as have it in their power should make *the poor man's pocket the bank of their riches.*"* He was a liberal supporter of the leading institutions of the day, and contributed very freely to almost innumerable chapel cases.

In the final arrangement of his worldly affairs, he was not unmindful of the Saviour's cause. He devoted, anonymously, several thousand pounds to the religious and benevolent institutions of the day, which he had been accustomed in life liberally to support. Mr. Hill frequently referred with great severity to illi-

* Answer to Wesley, page 38.

look at the clock, and say, "I see your time will not permit me to go through the subject, perhaps we may resume it on the next Sabbath.

One morning the excellent man gave out his text, "O God, my heart is fixed, I will sing, and give praise." He had not been preaching more than a quarter of an hour, when he anxiously looked at the clock — a sure indication that all was not right. He then paused —examined his text—took great pains to wipe his glasses,—but still the next thought came not forth. We feared, for once, the dear man was indeed "at a stand." At last, however, he proceeded. "O my dear brethren, it is a good thing to have the heart well fixed on the doctrines of the Gospel." He then began with justification, and it was soon found that he had thoroughly launched forth again. Before he got through two or three of the doctrines, the time prevented enlargement, and the old announcement was made, that the subject would be resumed at a future opportunity.

At these times the preacher displayed great personal composure. One Sabbath morning he was expounding a passage in Isaiah. He placed his spectacles on the side of the pulpit,—but

the zeal of the preacher soon displaced them, and they fell into the desk below. He wanted to refer to the Scriptures, but no glasses could be found. His pockets were searched, he looked again and again to the place where he had deposited them, but the glasses were not forthcoming. All this time he was making remarks, though not very much connected with the subject. At length he exclaimed, "Dear me, I have lost my glasses;" and then he made an improvement of the circumstance by the remark, "Dear young people, make the best use of your eyes while you can, for the time may soon come, when you will know the value of sight, by the loss of it." Another pair of spectacles being handed to the venerable man, he calmly added, "Now let us see what comes next."

These seasons of difficulty in the pulpit were only occasional, and intended to convince the preacher where his dependence should always be placed. His general style was lucid,—his thoughts flowed with freedom, and his illustrations were exceedingly apt. On the Sabbath evening, when powerfully excited, (and without excitement he could seldom preach well,) his eloquence resembled the flowing of a beautiful

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river, deep and clear, with occasional rushes and falls, as it meets with obstructions in its course. Many of his most beautiful illustrations were evidently the efforts of the moment. Hence, after discoursing on the wonderful love of God — when, like the apostle Paul, he seemed to have been taken up to the third heavens, he exclaimed, "But who can comprehend this mighty subject! It has breadths and lengths, and depths and heights, which pass knowledge. But I don't think there is a little sprat to be found, who will complain that there is too much water in the sea for it to swim in,—and so I am permitted, with my poor little sprat-like powers, to plunge into an ocean of love I shall never be able to fathom, or fully comprehend."

During the long ministry of Mr. Hill he seldom preached funeral sermons for his departed friends. He feared that sometimes they were the medium of unhallowed panegyric, and that it was often difficult to be faithful in all points when describing general character. On the removal of his hearers, he would briefly refer to the event, which he did with much feeling, and many tears, often adding, "Oh! we want such persons in the

world,—but they do not want them in heaven; there are no sinners to convert there. 'Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth.'"

The situation in which Mr. Hill moved prevented him from being able fully to sympathize, as a preacher, with the poor and afflicted of his flock. He had, for many years, passed through an even and pleasant path. The cross he had to bear at the close of life was light. His sermons, therefore, were not always richly laden with experimental observations.

A poor member, after hearing the pastor endeavour to comfort the saint who knew not where to obtain the next meal, remarked, "I think I could preach better on that point than our dear minister. I have *felt* what it has been to be nearly destitute of food for several days together. I have heard the cries of hungry children, piercing me to the very soul." However high the attainments of a preacher may be, it is "the furnace of affliction" alone, that will enable him, from deep sympathy of spirit, to "weep with those that weep," and fully to administer to 'the bruised reed' the rich supports of the Gospel of grace."

From the information given to the reader, it will appear that it was not all "rant" which

was heard from this venerable man, and that if there were sometimes "a plenitude of enthusiasm,"* it was the "love of Christ that constrained him" warmly to preach the truths of the Gospel.

There may have been seasons, perhaps, when an excited mind led him to use unguarded expressions,—but what good is likely to follow an *unfelt* address? The affections must be moved, before impressions are produced.

The animated feelings of Mr. Hill never led him out of the "good old paths" in which he had always travelled. He fed his people with knowledge and understanding. He was not, therefore, very likely to wander into the by-paths of modern prophecy during the closing days of his ministry. He had attentively read and studied the prophets, but could not come to the conclusions of the modern millennarian. No one more fully believed than he "that the earth would be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." He rejoiced in the prospect "that Bel would bow down, and that Nebo would stoop, before the sceptre of the Prince of Peace, but

* See Jones's Life, p. 27.

he never could believe that the kingdom of Christ would be of this world. He thought that it degraded the Divine Redeemer, to confine him in his personal reign to the narrow limits of the Holy Land,—but it appeared to him a high and spiritual view of the matter, to believe that the Saviour would reign, by his glorious Spirit, in the hearts of all people "made willing in the day of his power."

The words of the Redeemer, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power," always checked the holy mind of Mr. Hill from vain speculations as to the exact time when the Lord would make his second appearance. "I would not have you anxious," said he, the *last* time he addressed his people, "to settle the time when or the place where the Saviour is to come, so much as to consider that he is to come spiritually."

In a sermon preached in 1832 he remarks, "I fear that many good people have gone too far in the expectation of the personal coming of Christ, but I am sure none of us can go too far in our expectation of the *spiritual* coming of Christ. If Christ were to come into the next parish, what should I be the better for it in this corporeal state? But if he come into my heart,

blessed be his name, it makes a little heaven there. You cannot too frequently present to God that most solemn prayer, 'Thy kingdom come.' Oh! that lovely kingdom, that is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, the kingdom of God, which is Christ within us the hope of glory, a kingdom which rules over every passion of the mind, and brings us into holy subjection to the Lord."

He remarked in another of his sermons, "Though some people may have been a little out of the way in talking about Christ's temporal reign on earth, we shall none of us be out of the way in talking about his spiritual reign in our hearts."

He seldom, therefore, "sounded a trumpet, or poured out a vial of wrath, or broke the mystic seals," before his people. He confined himself to the great doctrinal and practical truths of the Bible, believing that they would build up the saint in his holy faith, and lead the wandering sinner to the Divine Redeemer as his only hope of salvation.

In 1832 I called on him, and found him closeted with a respectable-looking female, who appeared about thirty years of age. I was retiring from the room, when Mr. Hill called

me back, and begged me to be seated. There was then a silence for several seconds, and I saw by an inexpressibly sly shrug, that my venerable friend had an unwelcome visitor. The lady, however, was not "slow to speak." The silence was soon broken by a few remarks which she directed to me. "Sir,—I have felt it my duty to call on this good old gentleman, and endeavour to explain to him some great truths of which he appears to be quite ignorant. I heard him preach yesterday, and was quite distressed to think the people should be so misled. I have been talking with him, but he does not appear to understand me. Poor gentleman, I suppose his mind is getting very weak." "Very weak indeed," said Mr. Hill. The female teacher then expounded to me her prophetical system, and inquired, "Do you understand me?" "No, madam, I do not." "Dear me, how dark are the minds of some of the Lord's children!" "There now!" exclaimed my friend, "you have got it." I did not attempt to answer the rhapsody of the lady, and received her lecture in humble silence. At length, Mr. Hill, in a loud whisper across the table, said, pointing his finger to his head, and looking towards his fair friend, "I think there's a screw

to a stranger. Considering, however, the living to belong to the Redeemer's cause, he gave it to a faithful man. Doubtless, he felt deeply grieved that duty compelled him to oppose the wishes of his beloved relatives, but he added, "Had I acted otherwise, I should have prepared thorns for my pillow in the hour of death."

The conduct of Mr. Hill towards his servants greatly endeared him to all the members of his household. He felt great anxiety for their temporal and spiritual welfare, and he was often accustomed to say, "How honourable is the condition of a faithful servant!" The obligations between masters and servants were by him considered reciprocal. In describing the characters of others, he sometimes unintentionally sketched his own. In his funeral sermon for his friend Rouquet, he remarked, "He beheld his servants as his fellow-creatures, and knew that they had as much right to happiness as himself. Disdainful looks, proud, snappish, severe speeches, which some can make use of upon every supposed offence, were never seen or heard from him: hence none of those changes appeared among his servants which so sadly

disgrace the families of many. From the best of principles they were bound to serve him—the principle of love."*†

Such were the feelings of Mr. Hill, and hence he very frequently reminded the heads of families to take care of their tempers, and not be always scolding their domestics. Sometimes he became the banker of his servants, and when there was nearly enough money in his hands to invest, he would add a few pounds to the amount, to encourage them "to prepare against a rainy day."

* The kindness displayed by Mr. Hill and his brothers towards their servants, is seen in the record made by Mr. Richard Hill, and mentioned by Mr. Sidney. "February 6, 1766. This day, being Thursday, about a quarter past 12 at noon, my dear humble faithful servant, Giles Archer, sweetly fell asleep in Jesus. The Lord enable me to follow him as he followed Christ."‡ This young man was greatly beloved by all the members of the family. A few days before his death, his master, Mr. Richard Hill, went to see the dying servant, when he took him by the hand, and pressed it close, and said, "The Lord bless you, Sir, I know we shall meet again, for it is promised in a covenant that cannot fail." Then he prayed that the Lord would bless all the family, and expressed

† Token for Rouquet, p. 19. ‡ Sidney's Life, p. 23.

Mr. Hill once sent for a friend late in the evening, who, on his arrival found the venerable man in the parlour with his servant. Mr. Hill said, "I never gave a bill of exchange in my life, but I wish to do so for once. This man, pointing to his servant, has left a little money in my hands, and he wants to have power to punish me, if I should turn out a rogue." The servant

the greatest gratitude for the kindness which had been shown him. "Death has lost his sting: come, sweet Jesus, come quickly; why are thy chariot-wheels so long in coming? Into thy hands I commit my spirit."* He died in great peace. His master erected a neat stone to his memory, which is placed at the eastern end of Hodnet Church, on which is the following inscription:

In Memory of GILES ARCHER,
Servant to Richard Hill, Esq.
Of Hawkstone.
He sweetly fell asleep in Jesus,
Feb. 6, 1766, aged 35 years.
A most humble Christian,
A most faithful Servant,
In whose health it appear'd,
"That to live was Christ;"
In whose sickness,
"That to die was gain."†

* Original MSS. † Phil. i. 21.

assured his venerable master, he wished no such power. "You shall have it, and I will give you a bill of exchange." A stamp was sent for, and the necessary document prepared. The good man seemed quite delighted at the thought that he had for once given an acceptance, adding, that he hoped it would keep him honest, in case the devil should tempt him to do wrong.

His kindness to his servants was farther evidenced by the testamentary arrangements which he made, whereby he kindly and liberally provided for all his household.

"C———," he would often say, "has been a faithful servant, and he shall never want when I am gone." Frequently did he express the hope that all his domestics might become "servants of God, having their fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

When Mr. Hill was journeying, he felt much interested for the comfortable accommodation of his servants. At a friend's house, in Kent, where he was to sleep, he said to his worthy host, "I suppose my man had better get a bed at the inn?" "No, sir," was the reply, "we have provided for him." The venerable man

was evidently pleased, and smilingly remarked, "That's well—love me, love my dog also—for I brought him up from a puppy."

For many years prior to Mr. Hill's death, he needed the constant attentions of an attached domestic. Often he was so absent, that he would leave behind him many useful articles. Before his departure for chapel, he often underwent a complete catechetical exercise.—"Have you got your spectacles, Sir?" "Yes, Charles." "Your white pocket-handkerchief?" "Yes, Charles." "Your coloured one?" "Yes, Charles." Then it was necessary to keep a sharp look out, or he would decamp without his hat.

This absence of mind was often shewn. The writer was with him at breakfast during Mrs. Hill's illness, and noticed that he took the egg-boiler from the fire, and replaced it again, but without the egg. He then put water into the tea-pot, but omitted the tea. As soon as he poured it out, he observed, "it is very weak, and must stand a little longer." "Oh, my egg," said he, "it will be overdone." He endeavoured to find the egg, but in vain,—and smiled on discovering its absence from the boiler. "Are you sure, Sir, that you put tea

into your tea-pot?" said I. He examined, and found there was none,—and joined in a hearty laugh at his absence of mind.

Sometimes he was requested to give out a special notice during public service,—but he often forgot the subject till he was descending the stairs of the pulpit; he would then look round on a moving congregation, and make the announcement in such a style, that very few were benefited by the information he gave.

There was frequently great mental abstraction when Mr. Hill was walking through the public streets. He was often seen on a gentle trot, with his hands in his pockets. His inquisitive eye would rest on the articles in the shop-windows as he passed along, and he would sometimes remain for a few seconds, and then proceed. After he had once preached at the Bristol Tabernacle, the writer accompanied him home. He made several pauses, and at length placed himself before the door of a small shop. —The owner very soon made his appearance. "There, Sir," said Mr. Hill, "is the wretched father, who was loudly swearing at his poor children, when I was passing to the Tabernacle this morning." The astonished man soon retired:

when we proceeded on, our walk was improved by Mr. Hill's trite remarks on the various objects that caught his attention.

It may not be improper to notice the great attachment which Mr. Hill felt to the brute creation. His horses were his constant care. In his journeys he frequently checked his careful driver, and told him to "be kind to the good creatures." When obliged to cross the Severn, he has been known to go round by Gloucester, to prevent the horses from being terrified by the rolling of the passage-boat. These horses were bequeathed to his coachman; and even the day before he died, he spoke to his faithful driver, in reference to his old favourites. It was a very common thing for Mr. Hill to return home from a considerable distance, after late evening engagements, if he thought the stables of his friend would not afford comfortable quarters for his horses. His domestic cat and other creatures shared largely in his daily regards, and in every sense he was the good man who was merciful to his beast.

The following letter will shew how Mr. Hill, improved every passing circumstance:—

"Bristol, Oct. 28, 1804.

"To George Kemp, Esq., Poole.

"My dear Sir,

"I beg you would accept of my most grateful thanks for the Newfoundland puppy. He arrived safe at Bristol according to your direction, on Tuesday last, *in good health and spirits*, and was sent to Wotton-under-edge, where I have a little summer abode, and where, it is to be hoped, he will prove a faithful watch over some faithless thieves, who are too fond of meddling with that which is not their own. Thus we set dogs to arm against men, while men are in arms almost universally against each other—a sad evidence of the wretched state of our fallen race:—being at enmity and rebellion against God, it is but consistent that we should be given over by Him to be at enmity and rebellion against each other.

"I am sorry my servant forgot to send the Gansell's bergamy pear. I have, however, procured you a young tree, which I hope will soon come into bearing,—the fruit you will find most excellent. It is a great blower, but a bad bearer,—it will require a well-sheltered place. That you may live long to enjoy much of its

fruit, and live to bring forth much fruit yourself, is the sincere prayer of, dear Sir,

"Your ever obliged friend and servant,

"R. HILL."

Before finishing our remarks on the character of Mr. Hill, it may be proper to refer to the many singular reports totally unfounded in truth, that were in circulation respecting him. His eccentricities were calculated to furnish matter for the manufacturers of wonderful events. Some, even among pious people, are not sufficiently cautious on subjects which have not come within their personal knowledge.

At the very commencement of Mr. Hill's ministry at Surrey Chapel, he became the fruitful subject of parlour scandal, which soon reached the periodicals of the day. In the first sermon printed by Mr. Hill, he refers to one of these most absurd reports.

"It is stated by the reviewer, that I told, in one of my public harangues, about a carpenter and his labourer,—how the witty carpenter threw a chew of tobacco into the open mouth of the poor labourer, upon which the carpenter fell down, and broke his leg; this narration

we should deem too absurd for belief, if we had not heard it related in a public assembly, and without controversy, by a gentleman too elevated to coin so low a tale, and too judicious to be imposed upon by idle stories." Mr. Hill then positively denies the statement, and adds, in "reference to his reviewers, and the terms of his own denial, "I have humbled myself, in following these gentry in language almost as low as their own; like eels, they are now at liberty to sink into their own mud and dirt, as their safest place of refuge."

On a recent occasion the writer met several friends in the country, when a gentleman present related with great effect, and with all the air of novelty, one of the oft-told tales about "old Rowland." "I'm afraid, Sir, I remarked, that you have spoken from inaccurate information. I doubt the fact you have just stated: "I had it," replied he, with warmth, "from unquestionable authority." "Then I must bow," I rejoined, "provided your authority be better than mine. — Mr. Hill was my minister and friend, and he assured me that no such event had ever happened." The gentleman was silenced. He unintentionally propagated a

falsehood, by incautiously repeating what he had been told by another person.

A pious and excellent woman who long since joined the spirits of the just made perfect, recorded in her diary the very popular tale respecting the highwayman who stopped Mr. Hill, and who afterwards became his coachman, and died in his service.* Now, Mr. Hill assured the writer that no such event had ever happened. He once took up a volume of the "Percy Anecdotes," where the fact was recorded, with another equally without foundation, respecting his giving away his shirt to a destitute man. Across the one part he wrote, "a lie," and on the other, "another lie," and then added his name.

The admonition of St. James, "slow to speak," is very necessary to be remembered by the retailers of news affecting public men. If their statements do not injure the moral character, they may make the subject of such reports "the by-word of the scoffer."

During an evening which the writer spent with Mr. Hill a few months before the death of his excellent wife, the conversation turned upon these wonderful anecdotes. Mrs. Hill,

* See page 359.

I remember, inquired, with a smile, "Have you heard any thing about me?" I told her of the reports of her husband putting a new cap into the fire immediately it came home; of his reported assertion in chapel, "Here come's Mrs. Hill with a chest of drawers on her head;" refering to a highly fashionable bonnet; and of several other rumours which were very current in the country. All the tales I could remember were positively declared to be false, by the venerable pair, and Mr. Hill evidently felt much grieved that such statements should be in circulation. I think I now see his countenance, when he said, "Sir, I hope that the Christian minister, if not the gentleman, always prevented me from making my wife a laughing-stock for the amusement of the vulgar."

It is quite impossible for any person who had private intercourse with Mr. Hill to believe any of the tales respecting his public exposure of his wife. His attentions to her till the close of life were of the most gentlemanly kind.

On one occasion, the writer ventured to suggest to Mr. Hill, that, seeing how many false reports were current, it was highly important that he should enable a qualified person to give an authentic account of his life and

labours when it might be the will of God to remove him. He said, "What can any one say about me? a poor unworthy creature, I'm sure. No, I want no life." Mrs. Hill then expressed her hope that an accurate memoir might be published, because she knew that more than one person had been collecting materials for that purpose. The venerable man gave a similar reply, and the conversation turned to other matters. Inaccurate reports perhaps arise from the gradual additions which are made to real facts, by the successive relaters. It often happens, that when a man of exuberant imagination wishes

"To point a moral, or adorn a tale,"

or when he is "the lion" of the evening party, he is in danger of colouring too highly the simple narrative, in order that it may *tell* upon his audience. His statement is incorrectly repeated, or several parts are mingled together, and thus arise some of the marvellous and unfounded tales which have tended to make a holy man "the fiddle and the bear" of a gossiping party.

If Christian fidelity required that the spots in Mr. Hill's ministerial course should be men-

tioned in the spirit of love, it is equally important that the weaknesses of his private character should be referred to in the same spirit. In Scripture biography the failings as well as the excellences of the saints are recorded, that the Christian may learn to avoid the one and imitate the other. We are only safe when we follow in His steps who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners."

Amidst all that was "lovely, and pure, and of good report," there were some things that for a season appeared to cast a cloud over this "burning and shining light." He certainly too often listened to flatterers, who sometimes made him an easy prey to their cunning and designing purposes. At Surrey Chapel there were a few persons who kept near this weak side of the holy man. Hence they always expressed their regret to him at his absence, and asserted that no supply preached like him. After these premises, out came some unkind expressions against certain individuals; and in this way they often succeeded in their object. If they knew that Mr. Hill had an unfavourable opinion of a minister, they would assiduously collect all the news about him, and the pastor's mind becoming

prejudiced, he appeared to possess an unforgiving spirit. His antipathies became very strong when once they had possession of his mind. On the other hand, he was often unguarded in the selection of his friends, and received more than once a scorpion into his bosom. There are many persons at Surrey Chapel who can remember a lamentable instance of this kind, which for a season led Mr. Hill to appear in an unfavourable light to several esteemed clergymen.

Mr. Hill was occasionally mistaken in hi estimate of character, and severely suffered by placing unguarded confidence in unworthy persons. He once became security for a member of his church; the man failed, and the incautious pastor had to pay £1000, the amount of his bond. On the morning he discharged his liability, he called upon a friend, who, observing that he was unusually depressed, remarked, "Why, Mr. Hill, what's the matter with you to-day? you seem altogether heavy and uncomfortable." "Heavy, Sir," replied Mr. Hill; "heavy, Sir; you're quite mistaken there, for I'm a thousand pounds lighter than I was yesterday."

His occasional commendations of attached friends were very extravagant and injudicious. Hence he was accustomed to say of a minister who preached at the Tabernacle at Wotton, "If we had a dozen such preachers as —— in the land, we should soon drive the devil out of it." And of a respectable preacher, once a scholar in the Surrey Chapel Sunday-school, "I never preached in all my life like my baker's boy," referring to the minister's former occupation.

In intercourse with the venerable man, it was found that he expected his friends to possess some practical knowledge of the doctrine of passive obedience. In reference to a devoted minister whom he had been the means of leading to God, and who possessed much independence of mind, Mr. Hill shrewdly remarked, "He is a nice lad, but he will have his own way."

The uncharitable expressions which he employed concerning some persons who strictly adhered to their own denominations were painful exhibitions of the weakness of a great man. He could scarcely give them credit for sincerity in their views. This will be seen in reference to the friends at Leamington who had discontinued

the use of the Liturgical service; yet there can be no reason to doubt that they were as conscientious, and had as little of the spirit of party about them, as the venerable champion for the formularies to which he was so greatly attached.

On one occasion, the worthy man expressed himself strongly against a pious and justly esteemed prelate, for his conduct towards a clergyman who had allowed him the use of his pulpit. He took up the matter with personal feelings, and charged the parties with a bigoted spirit; but in due time he mourned in secret over the course he had pursued. It is often difficult to see the mote in our own eye. Dr. Jamieson perhaps was not far from the truth, when he called our departed friend "a bigot for liberality."

Mr. Hill was conversing with an Independent minister, when he remarked with much feeling, "I *hate in*dependency." "Yes, Sir," replied his Congregational friend, "and you hate *de*pendency just as much." This was about the truth.

Such was Mr. Hill; and the writer, in recording the weaknesses and defects in the character

of his beloved minister, has discharged the most painful part of the biographer's duty. He could, however, when remembering the number of his excellences, willingly drop the tear of grateful recollection over his imperfections, and blot them out for ever.

CHAP. VIII.

MR. HILL'S PHILANTHROPIC LABOURS, AND PUBLIC SPIRIT.

FRIENDLY AND SOUP SOCIETIES—LORD GEORGE GORDON'S RIOTS—SERMON TO VOLUNTEERS AT SURREY CHAPEL—AND THE HYMNS COMPOSED FOR THE OCCASION—MR. HILL'S EFFORTS TO PROMOTE COW-POCK INOCULATION,—AND DR. LETTSOM'S TESTIMONY TO MR. HILL'S USEFULNESS—INTERESTING FACTS STATED BY MR. HILL—EFFORTS TO PREVENT THE ASSESSMENT OF SURREY CHAPEL TO THE POOR-RATES—SUCCESSFUL ISSUE OF THE CONTEST—VISITS TO PRISONERS—AFFECTING ACCOUNT OF THE GARDENER—POLITICAL OPINIONS OF MR. HILL—THE GLOUCESTERSHIRE ELECTION—BRITISH CONSTITUTION—DANGER OF POLITICS TO MINISTERS—PENINSULAR WAR, AND ITS TERMINATION—GENERAL ILLUMINATION—PRESENTATION OF THE FREEDOM OF LONDON TO LORD HILL—REPEAL OF THE TEST ACT—MR. HILL REQUESTED TO PREACH ON CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION — JOHN FOX THE MARTYROLOGIST — THE POOR CATHOLIC AND THE MASS—MR. HILL'S OPINION OF POPERY—THE SLAVE-TRADE—HYMN THEREON—ANECDOTE.

A CHRISTIAN, although admonished by the Divine word "to love not the world, neither the things that are in the world," is not to pass through the years of his pilgrimage like a religious hermit. He is to avoid the spirit of earthly things, but at the same time he is to "do good unto *all men*, though more especially to those who are of the household of faith."

The pastor of Surrey Chapel was not unmindful of the public duties which devolved upon him. He was the friend of "the sick and the afflicted," and the aged and infirm poor. He was unabated in his efforts to promote the general education of the people, and encouraged, by every lawful means, the diffusion of general knowledge. To promote habits of economy and industry, he sanctioned a benefit club for the relief of its members and their families in the hours of affliction,—the meetings of which were held in the school-room, adjoining his London residence.

During several severe winters, when the poor people in London were in deep distress in consequence of the high price of bread, Mr. Hill was active in the formation of soup societies—which were beneficial to thousands. On this subject he corresponded with friends in the country, and gave them full instructions how to proceed. After detailing to one friend, in Berkshire, the best plan of making good soup at a cheap rate, he adds the characteristic remark, "Take care to put in plenty of onions; —by the way, the Egyptians worshipped onions, better worship them than the devil."

The loyal character of Mr. Hill, and his anxiety always to be engaged in his Master's business, was seen during the awful riots in St. George's Fields, when Lord George Gordon excited so much of the public attention. During these tumultuous meetings, Mr. Hill addressed the multitudes on "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come;" and he has been heard to state, that on these occasions he had sometimes proclaimed the Gospel of peace to nearly twenty thousand immortal souls.

In 1803, an interesting spectacle was witnessed at Surrey Chapel. Mr. Hill preached to the volunteer regiments which were raised at that time, when hostilities commenced between England and France, at the close of the short peace of Amiens. The attendance was very large, and many of the newly raised troops were unable to obtain admittance. Mr. Hill remarks that "the respectable appearance of the volunteers, their becoming deportment in the house of God, and especially the truly animated manner in which they all stood up to sing the high praises of our God, filled me with solemn surprise, and exhi-

bited before me one of the most affecting scenes I think I ever beheld."*

This novel service was introduced by singing the hundredth Psalm. The first lesson was taken out of the 20th of Deuteronomy, from verse 1 to 10. The second lesson, from Ephesians, chap. vi. 10—19. The following hymn, composed by Mr. Hill for the occasion, was sung before the sermon, to the tune of "God save the King:"—

Come, thou incarnate Word,
Gird on thy mighty sword,
Our prayer attend:
Come, and thy people bless,
And give thy word success,
Spirit of holiness,
On us descend.

O may thy servant be
Fill'd with sweet liberty,
Clothed with power!
Bid, Lord, the dead arise,
By thy almighty voice;
May we in thee rejoice,
In this glad hour.

* Sermon before the Volunteers, p. 4.

The preacher then addressed the Volunteers, from the appropriate words in Psa. xx. 7, 8, 16, "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the Lord our God. They are brought low, and fallen; but we are risen, and stand upright."

The sermon contained most enlightened views of the constitution of our country,—and directed the minds of the defenders of her liberties, to the great truths connected with another world. The following beautiful passage was highly descriptive of the times,—"Did you ever stand by the ocean after a tremendous storm? Did you ever watch the vast impetuosity of the waves, as they lift themselves up against those firm rocks, appointed by Providence to resist the proudest of them? Their resistance being made, they retire, and are lost in the bed of the ocean. So, stand but for a while, and view the present crisis of our public affairs,—and I trust you will behold these proud waves, that now attempt to dash themselves against our British shore, retiring back again into that ocean from whence, with so much impetuosity, they arose, leaving nothing but their unavailing froth behind."

This service was closed by singing the following hymn. It was composed by Mr. Hill, and a little altered and enlarged by the pen of a judicious friend, and sung to the national air, "Rule Britannia."

THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST EXALTED.

When Jesus first, at Heaven's command,
Descended from his azure throne,
Attending angels joined his praise,
Who claimed the kingdoms for his own:
Hail Immanuel!—Immanuel we'll adore,
And sound his fame from shore to shore.

Girt with omnipotence supreme,
The powers of darkness trembling stood,
To hear the dire decree, and feel
The vengeance of the mighty God:
Hail, &c.

Not with the sword that warriors wear,
But with a sceptre dipped in blood,
He bends the nations to obey,
And rules them by the love of God:
Hail, &c.

Oh may the memory of his name
Inspire our armies for the fight;
Our vaunting foes shall die with shame,
Or quit our coasts with hasty flight:
Hail, &c.

In his salvation is our boast,
And in the strength of Israel's God,
Our troops shall lift their banners high,
Our navies spread their flags abroad:
Hail, &c.

Soon may the kingdoms of the earth,
From sin and Satan's dreadful thrall
By thy great power and grace be freed,
And Christ alone be all in all:
Hail, &c.

Ride on and prosper, King of kings,
Till all the powers of hell resign
Their dreadful trophies at thy feet,
And everlasting praise be thine:
Hail, &c.

Early in the present century Mr. Hill felt deeply interested on the subject of vaccine inoculation. Dr. Jenner, a physician residing at Berkeley, in Gloucestershire, in the vicinity of Mr. Hill's residence—after many successful experiments—discovered what was then considered an absolute preventive of small-pox; a disease which was desolating the towns and hamlets of our land. The benevolent mind of Mr. Hill rejoiced in the prospect of any alleviation of the dreadful plague. He calmly

investigated the subject,—and, after frequent interviews with Dr. Jenner, he felt it to be his duty to stand forward as the advocate of general vaccination, at a time when many medical men not only refused to sanction it, but strongly excited the prejudices of the public against the measure. In 1806 Mr. Hill published a small pamphlet entitled, "Cow-pock Inoculation Vindicated and Recommended, from Matters of Fact," which he dedicated to the Duke of Bedford, then Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.

Although there have been some failures after vaccination, yet the discovery has proved a great national blessing. Dr. Jenner successfully contended against the powerful opposition of the medical profession, and established the Royal Jennerian Society. He received a grant of £10,000 from parliament, for the great benefit he had imparted to his country and the world.

Mr. Hill became a member of the Royal Jennerian Society, and felt much anxiety for its general success. From the pamphlet which has been mentioned, it appears that his first efforts to spread the blessings of vaccination commenced early in the summer of 1804, in

and about Wotton-under-edge. The neighbourhood was exceedingly populous, and nearly twelve hundred patients were vaccinated. The new system succeeded so well, that the small-pox, which had been fearfully raging, disappeared from the place. At Portsmouth Mr. Hill prosecuted the plan: at Bristol also, in the autumn of the year, he vaccinated hundreds with entire success. In the year 1805, being on a visit at Chatham, he found the small-pox prevailing to an awful extent. He immediately set to work, and having appointed the people to meet him at three different places of worship, he inoculated three hundred and twenty subjects within two days. After this, vaccination became general among medical men in those parts. At Shepton Mallet he had to encounter the prejudices of the people against the new system, although seventy persons had recently fallen victims to the small-pox. He recommended the subject in his sermon on the Lord's-day, and on the following morning vaccinated upwards of two hundred persons. At different places, Mr. Hill instructed suitable persons in the use of the lancet for this purpose.

During a summer excursion into South Wales, he inoculated 996 in Pembrokeshire. "Thus,"

he remarks, "the poor people in and about the neighbourhood of Haverfordwest are mercifully preserved from a contagious disease, which would very probably have made inroads among them, while no less than three hundred in the town of Carmarthen, at a distance of about thirty miles from Haverfordwest, were carried to the grave, the victims of that awful disease, the small-pox."

After detailing the particulars of the opposition the plan had met with, Mr. Hill states, "I have now solemnly to assert, that having inoculated in different places not less than 4840 subjects, besides 3720 and upwards, which have been inoculated in the Surrey Chapel school-room, I have not as yet met with one single failure."

The benefits of this new discovery were not confined to England. It extended to our colonial possessions. Dr. Lettsom, an eminent physician of his day, and a member of the Society of Friends, in writing to Mr. Hill, informed him, "that a physician in Madras had inoculated two hundred and fifty thousand British subjects and Gentoos with the cow-pock, without the least inconvenience; and that the grateful Brahmins termed it the *dew of*

heaven, because, prior to this, nine in ten, as is frequently the case in those hot countries, lost their lives; that this happy preservative having been administered in camps and armies, the small-pox had been arrested in its progress without the least inconvenience whatever." The Doctor concludes by stating, "You have done more good than you imagine; and for every one you may have saved by your actual operation, you have saved ten by your example, and perhaps, next to Jenner, have been the means of saving more lives than any other individual. Under this sentiment, you possess the unfeigned esteem of your friend."

This testimony must have been exceedingly encouraging to Mr. Hill. In calculating the beneficial results of inoculating ten thousand persons, one half that number having been done with his own hand, he remarks, "If we take the average of deaths by the small-pox to be rather under one in six, the vaccination of ten thousand subjects therefore produces the preservation of *one thousand six hundred lives*. After having said so much, I need not add, that, next to attending upon the functions of my own calling, I never undertook a work so satisfactory to my own mind. Let our exertions be universal, imme-

diate, and zealous, and I am very sure a death by the small-pox will be brought forward as a very rare instance indeed."*

It pleased God to spare Mr. Hill to see to a great extent the removal of public prejudice against the system of vaccination. In some cases small-pox has followed it, but in few instances have such cases been known to be fatal. Mr. Hill was on terms of great intimacy with Dr. Jenner, whom he highly respected; and one of the London vaccine stations still continues in operation in the school-rooms adjoining Surrey Chapel.

The long persevering and eventually successful efforts of Mr. Hill in opposing parochial assessments on places of religious worship, must not be overlooked in this memoir. He feared that if Surrey Chapel were assessed for poor rates, it might be most prejudicial to small Dissenting chapels throughout the country. He admitted, that by the act of the 43d Elizabeth, on which the poor laws were founded, all places of religious worship producing profit might be assessed; yet he adds, meeting-houses could not have been within the meaning of the act, because none were then permitted to exist.

* Cow-pock Inoculation Vindicated.

In answer to the point, that all places having a beneficial interest should be taxed, he says, "Are we to ask the magistrate what repairs or alterations *he* may judge necessary or reasonable? Perhaps it may next come within his province to determine the quantity and size of candles we may be allowed to consume; while he may demand how far the charge for mops and brushes may go beyond an allowable expense. Who can tell what may be the effect of such magisterial proceedings? If this law is to be brought against some places, why not against all? and especially against such as can so well afford it? Why should the beneficial interest of a rich cathedral be free from taxation, because from their large estates they need not let their seats, while poor unendowed places of worship are to feel the due effects of this new construction of an old law? they having no other method of supporting their forms of religious worship which in conscience they choose to adopt."

The spirited publications of Mr. Hill, and his repeated appeals to the sessions, induced the parish of Christchurch, in which Surrey Chapel was situated, to come to the equitable resolution, "that no public place of worship what-

ever, situated in the parish, should be included in the poor-rate." The very individual, also, who was most active in these legal and vexatious proceedings against the chapel, afterwards became a warm admirer of our venerable friend.

During these legal contentions, Mr. Hill was the subject of severe animadversion by the learned counsel employed for his opponents, and the most extraordinary statements were made, which were only worthy of the dark ages; "What claim had people of this description," exclaimed the zealous advocate for intolerance, "to be exempted from the poor-rates? None whatever, — for he was persuaded, and many persons, and wise ones too, were of opinion that the present prevailing and increasing system of Methodism, existed for the ultimate and final destruction of the established church of England." The counsel assured the court, "that the persons whose cause he was advocating, viewed with alarm and apprehension the splendid and benevolent donations of Mr. Hill,—justly considering them as the most powerful instruments employed in the propaganda of Methodism. These acts of ostentatious charity were a gratification Mr. Hill

should not be allowed to indulge in, without first contributing to the relief of the parochial poor." This language will appear still more extraordinary, when the reader is informed that the sick and afflicted poor of the parish had sometimes received £200 in the year, from the benevolent and voluntary subscriptions raised in the very chapel sought to be taxed.

An application to parliament led to the passing of "an act to repeal certain acts, and amend other acts relating to religious worship and assemblies, and persons teaching and preaching therein." To this Mr. Hill refers, in the following extract,—"Our religious privileges were always great, but now greater still since the passing of the religious worship act: we have scarcely any thing now left to excite our fears, while we have the highest cause for respect and gratitude to our governors, and thankfulness before God. May our affectionate obedience keep pace with the privileges we so amply enjoy."

The prisoners in our gaols were frequently visited by our benevolent friend, and, after their condemnation, he would kindly enter their cells, and point them to that gracious Redeemer who was able to save them even in the

eleventh hour. In one of these visits of mercy to Gloucester goal, he met with a man to whom his conversation appeared to be useful. He exercised his influence on his behalf,—and succeeded, not only in saving his life, but eventually in obtaining his liberty. On the man leaving the prison, he could obtain no situation for want of a good character, when Mr. Hill kindly took him into his employ as a gardener, and he conducted himself with much propriety for a considerable time. The writer has heard his venerable friend mention, that so entirely did this man appear to be devoted to God, that when sometimes he indulged in free and lively remarks to his servants, the gardener would look with great gravity at him, and meekly suggest the propriety of dying men being constantly serious. Such, however, was the deceitfulness of the heart, that this man afterwards resumed his former wicked pursuits, was tried for several robberies, was condemned to death, and eventually executed. His benevolent master again visited him in his cell; and, during the conversations he had with him, the prisoner confessed that he had made frequent attempts to break into his master's house, after

he left his service; that he had secreted himself several times near the premises, but had always been prevented accomplishing his purpose, by the recollection of his master's great kindness to him, and an awful and overwhelming impression that God was in the place.

Mr. Hill considered this fact was the origin of the famous tale, which has been referred to in a previous chapter, viz.—that he was once stopped by a highwayman, who was overpowered by Christian kindness, and afterwards became his coachman. It sometimes happened, when Mr. Hill was travelling, and was recognized by the public, some persons would look at the worthy and upright driver, and, to his great annoyance, remark, "There's the man that stopped his master on the highway."

The mind of Mr. Hill was generally depressed when he returned from the lonely cell of the prisoner. The impressions produced upon the minds of such unhappy persons appeared at times to be permanent, but too often, like the "morning cloud and the early dew," they soon passed away. "The Four Dialogues in Prison," written by Mr. Hill, and printed by

the Religious Tract Society, contains some affecting references to prison scenes.

In detailing these particulars of Mr. Hill's public conduct, the reader will expect some account of his opinions on the political movements of the eventful period through which he had passed. He was an eminently loyal subject, and devotedly attached to the finely balanced powers of the British constitution. On this subject he has remarked, —"Our civil constitution has rendered us the envy and admiration of the world. What I now say respecting our civil government, I say from the very ground of my heart. I am glad that we have an hereditary monarch to fill the throne. I am glad that the rich men of the nation, possessed of much landed property, compose a House of Lords, and are the hereditary senators of the land, to form a balance in our civil power; and I am glad the people have their elective representatives in the House of Commons on their behalf."*

During the period of the writer's acquaintance with Mr. Hill, he only once took any

* Spiritual Characteristics, p. 15.

public part in the political movements of the day — and then he felt it his duty to canvass for votes, when the late Sir William Guise became the candidate for the representation of Gloucestershire. He exerted his influence in favour of the liberal candidate, with whose political sentiments, on most points, he coincided. He, however, appears to have resolved never to touch politics again, after the termination of that election. Before any one ventures to cast a stone at the good man for the course he pursued, let him remember that his example is not likely to be extensively prejudicial, if those who refer to it in justification of their own conduct, will, in another respect, follow in his steps, namely, only thus publicly to become the politician once in eighty-nine years.

It was the decided conviction of Mr. Hill, that Christian ministers should abstain from the political agitations of the day. Feeling persuaded that the spiritual tone of their minds must be injured by frequent contact with noisy partisans, he was grieved when he heard of any of his brethren being fond of such pursuits. He thought the study, the closet, and the pulpit, more suitable spots for the ambassador

of Christ, than the committee-room, the hustings, and the dining-hall. The minister's great work, to which he had devoted his life, and consecrated all his powers, should occupy his chief and constant attention, and every thing be relinquished which would interfere with his spiritual usefulness. He very frequently regretted that a beloved brother had been led unwarrantably to expend large sums of money in a contested election, urged forward by a clergyman in whose opinions he placed considerable confidence.

The political opinions of Mr. Hill being at variance with those of the leading members of his family, he seldom brought them very prominently forward. "The fear of man" would never have kept him back from the firm statement of his views, had he judged the same to be really necessary. In private conversation, however, he would freely canvass the political movements of the day.

During the long Peninsula war, Mr. Hill felt the deepest interest in the result of every battle, because there were some engaged in the conflict who were dear to him. On the tidings reaching England, of the dreadful conflict of Waterloo, which led to the final

overthrow of Napoleon's power, he listened with thrilling solicitude to the statements. He found that his five brave nephews were all preserved amidst the dreadful slaughter which had taken place; and his flowing tears, and his uplifted hand, testified how sincerely grateful he felt for the mercies that had been so pre-eminently experienced by his illustrious relatives. On the general illumination taking place, to celebrate the victory of Waterloo, Mr. Hill placed a neat transparency in the front of Surrey Chapel. On a scroll at the top of the picture were the words, "The tyrant is fallen!"—Then appeared a quotation from Obadiah iii. 4. "The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? Though thou exalt thyself *as the eagle*, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord." Then followed, "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth," Psalm ii. 10. The painting contained an allegorical description of the times. On the short peace of Amiens, Mr. Hill exhibited an appropriate transparency, with the quaint motto,

"May the new-born peace be as old as Methuselah."

Soon after the close of the war, Sir Rowland Hill was raised to the peerage, which afforded great pleasure to his venerable uncle. The City of London afterwards presented his lordship with its freedom. Mr. Hill witnessed the ceremony, and was loudly cheered by the people, who crowded to see the noble warrior. The Chamberlain, on placing the sword in the hands of Lord Hill, made a beautiful reference to the fact, that one of his ancestors was the first Protestant Lord Mayor of the City. His lordship continues to merit the confidence of his sovereign,—and for several years has held the distinguished and responsible office of Commander-in-chief of his Majesty's Forces.

It was an interesting picture to see the venerable man, towards the evening, looking into the daily news. Before his sight failed he often read himself, but afterwards his servant discharged that office. He would make most pointed and shrewd remarks on the various matters which the journal brought before him. He was the decided friend of liberal men and liberal measures. He, therefore, rejoiced in

the repeal of the test and corporation acts, and anticipated no dangers from the emancipation of the Roman Catholics. On the latter subject, as might be expected, there were differences of opinion among the members of his congregation. There were a few who greatly feared that the passing of the emancipation bill would be followed by the fires of Smithfield. "The lions are now safe," said they, "let us not let them out of confinement." There were others who took different views of the question, and had no fears as to the effect of the measure. The press, they thought, was their protection against the waning power of the pope. At that time the discussions in parliament greatly excited the public mind. Mr. Hill was requested, by both parties, to preach a suitable sermon on the subject. Each side expected an advocate of his own peculiar views. The good man, on the Sabbath morning, took a suitable text, and dwelt on very general topics. Just before the close of the sermon he archly remarked, "There are some of you saying, 'We should like to hear the old gentleman's opinions on the subject of Catholic emancipation?' Should you?—ah! the old gentleman is *too old* to give them. If he should do

so, and they were not like your own, you might say, 'Poor, dear man, he gets old, and his intellects are rather dull.'" Then raising himself in the pulpit, and appearing as if anxious to lull the fears of the timid, he added, in a deep and mimic majestic tone, "But to tell you the truth, beloved, I don't think that the fagot will grow for the next hundred years, which will burn the next protestant martyr to popish intolerance in our country."

These well-timed remarks satisfied all parties, and proved that the preacher, though more than fourscore years old, had not quite worn out his powers. He had no fears as to the future efforts of popery, provided the knowledge of the Bible was made known, and the press remained unfettered. His sentiments harmonized with those of honest John Fox, the martyrologist, who thus expressed himself on the power of the Christian press: "I suppose, that either the pope must abolish printing, or seek a new world to reign over, or else, as this world standeth, printing will doubtless abolish him. But the pope, and all his college of cardinals, must this understand, that through the light of printing, the world now beginneth to

have eyes to see, and heads to judge. He cannot walk so invisibly in a net, but he will be spied. And although through him might be stopped the mouth of John Huss, and of Jerome, that they might not preach, thinking to make his kingdom sure, yet, instead of John Huss and others, God hath opened the press to preach, whose voice the pope is never able to stop, with all the puissance of his triple crown. By this printing, as by gift of tongues, and, as by the singular organ of the Holy Spirit, the doctrine of the Gospel soundeth to all nations and countries under heaven; and what God revealed unto one man is dispensed to many, and what is known to one nation is opened to all."

Mr. Hill believed that "the sword of the Spirit," even the word of God, was the grand instrument for the destruction of popery. He was fond of telling a tale of a poor Roman Catholic, to whom he gave a New Testament. After the man had read through the sacred book, he went back to him, and said, "Sir, this can't be the word of God, for there is not one word about the mass in it." "No, my friend," said Mr. Hill, "you'll not find the mass in the

Bible." This circumstance led the man to examine other points, and eventually to embrace the Protestant faith.

On the subject of the Roman Catholic errors, he remarked, "I am sure it is impossible to correct a man's errors by persecution; a man's errors could never be beat out of his head by a cudgel. The faith of Christ should always be contended for in a Christian spirit. Some looked at popery on the black side, calling to mind when fire and fagots were burning in Smithfield; but the times were gone by for spreading religion by fagot or cudgel, for surely people could not keep in the right path by incarcerating and excommunicating one another, or by imposing heavy penances upon transgressors. Let us have no weapons but those of kindness and love. I am glad that I took no part in the Catholic question; I thought it my duty to stand aloof from it altogether, and to leave it in the hands of those who know better how to deal with it than I could pretend to do. I trust that all men will now arrange themselves on the side of truth, and refuse to listen to error; for I am well convinced, that whatever delusions may

prevail among the people, they will be dissipated in these great and enlightened days."*

In reference to the Roman Catholic religion, he remarked, "The power of popery is now dethroned by God, and shall never more be established by man. I would not wish that a papist not guilty of political crimes should be prosecuted, but the designs of popery should ever be watched with a guarded and a jealous eye. Every thing should be adopted towards the Roman Catholics which is conciliatory, prudent, and wise."†

The great attachment which Mr. Hill ever felt for the principles of civil and religious liberty, led him strongly to condemn the inhuman traffic in slaves, and to support all the efforts made for their emancipation. He experienced the sincerest joy when he found there was a prospect of their deliverance from cruel bondage. Many years before, he had composed the following simple lines on the subject, which he sent to one of the magazines of the day.

* Speech at the Anniversary of the British and Foreign School Society, May, 1829.

† Village Dialogues, pages 59—107.

Now let the efforts of our praise
Arise to Him who reigns above,
In whose essential holiness
Dwells the eternal flame of love.

Jesus our God, thy love we sing,
Unknown to sinners of our race,
Till thy compassions brought thee down,
To save us by thy wondrous grace.

Then what is heaven, but as we find
In thee is all we wish to be?
And what is hell in man, dear Lord,
But as he is devoid of thee?

Then where is heaven, but in the soul
Who dwells in thee supremely blest?
And where is hell, but on the shore
Where mercy finds no peaceful rest?

Soon may this love and mercy teach
The swarthy tribes of Afric's shore,
Those slaves of sin thou can'st set free,
And bid them go and sin no more.

We blush with holy shame, that men
Who bear thy sacred name, our God,
Should dare one single man enslave,
Or shed one drop of human blood.

Kindle the flame of love divine
In some kind heralds of thy grace,
And bid each distant clime receive
The gladsome tidings of thy grace.

Mr. Hill once mentioned his sentiments on this important question, and stated the following fact. "A poor negro called on me some years since, and told me that 'his massa beat him very bad,' and inquired what he should do? 'Do,' said I, 'why, run away from your cruel master as hard as you can.' 'Ah! massa,' replied the negro, 'me cannot run away, for me poor slave.' 'Slave! no such thing; the moment you touched British ground you were free; we have no slaves here!' The poor negro, delighted with the intelligence, said, 'Then me will run away as good massa say;' and off he went accordingly."

Mr. Hill, in his closing days viewed with calm delight the public movements, and indulged the hope that his beloved country would still be the glory of lands. He believed that all national measures would be overruled for the good of the Christian church, and the rapid extension of religious knowledge throughout the world.

CHAP. IX.

MR. HILL'S CONNEXION WITH THE RELIGIOUS EFFORTS AND INSTITUTIONS OF THE DAY, WITH A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE SOCIETIES ESTABLISHED AT SURREY CHAPEL.

THE BOOK SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE AMONG THE POOR—THE EARTHQUAKE IN LONDON IN 1749—THE LABOURS OF WHITEFIELD AND WESLEY—DR. DODDRIDGE—THE GREAT WANT OF BIBLES—SUNDAY SCHOOL SOCIETY—MR. HILL'S COADJUTORS—THE LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY—WARWICKSHIRE ASSOCIATION—PRAYER MEETING AT EDINBURGH—THE BRISTOL CONFERENCE—THE CRADLE OF THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY—THE REV. JOHN EYRE—FIRST PUBLIC MEETING—MINISTERS THEN PRESENT—MR. HILL'S FIRST SERMON FOR THE SOCIETY AT SURREY CHAPEL—BEAUTIFUL DESCRIPTION OF A MISSIONARY—DR. BOGUE'S REMARKS ON BIGOTRY AND THE EFFECTS THEY PRODUCED—THE EPITAPH ON BIGOTRY—ITS SUBSEQUENT RESURRECTION—ANNUAL MISSIONARY COLLECTIONS AND MISSIONARY DAY AT SURREY CHAPEL—FEMALE MISSIONARY SOCIETY—LETTER TO REV. RICHARD KNILL—THE MISSIONARY AND THE WHEELBARROW—RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY—ITS FORMATION—MR. HILL'S TRACTS—BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY—ITS ORIGIN—THE FIRST MINUTE OF THE COMMITTEE, AND ITS SUBSEQUENT PROCEEDINGS—LETTER FROM MR. REISLING OF NUREMBERG—FIRST SUGGESTION OF AUXILIARY SOCIETIES FROM MR. WILLIAMS OF BIRMINGHAM—THE TITLE OF THE BIBLE SOCIETY SUGGESTED—THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS—FORMATION OF THE SOCIETY—FIRST GRANT MADE TO THE VENERABLE OBERLIN—BIBLE ASSOCIATION AT SURREY CHAPEL—EXTRACTS FROM MR. HILL'S SPEECHES AT BIBLE MEETINGS—HIS OBJECTION TO APOLOGIES FOR ATTENDING SUCH MEETINGS—ANNIVERSARY OF BIBLE SOCIETY IN 1831—THE EFFECT OF MR. HILL'S SPEECH ON THAT OCCASION—ORIGINAL LETTER TO THE AUTHOR—THE BENEVOLENT SOCIETY—ITS NATURE, GREAT USEFULNESS, AND ANNIVERSARY MEETINGS—FIRST SUNDAY-SCHOOL IN LONDON—RAIKES—OBJECTIONS ANSWERED—PAID TEACHERS—NEW SYSTEM OF DISINTERESTED AGENCY—BEAMS—SIMS—GIBBS—BRIDGES—BURCHETT—NEALE—COLONEL HANDFIELD—ORIGIN OF SOUTHWARK SUNDAY-SCHOOL SOCIETY—ITS RESULTS—ANECDOTES—PLANS OF USEFULNESS—APOLOGY FOR SUNDAY-SCHOOLS—OPINIONS ON EDUCATION—RECORDER OF LONDON—MEETINGS OF SUNDAY-SCHOOL CHILDREN AT EASTER—MR. HILL'S LAST ADDRESS—INFANT SCHOOLS—DORCAS AND CLOTHING SOCIETIES—ALMS-HOUSES—CHELTENHAM—LEAMINGTON—LAY AGENCY—BUNYAN—CAPTAIN SCOTT—FERRETS—INDIRECT INFLUENCE OF SOCIETIES AT SURREY CHAPEL.

THE history of Mr. Hill is intimately connected with the rise and progress of many of the

religious and benevolent institutions of the times in which he lived, particularly those which have been established on the catholic principles which he loved to promote. Among these excellent charities is, "The Book Society for Promoting Religious Knowledge among the Poor," which was formed in 1750. It was one of the earliest societies, if not the first, which established the principle of union among the different sections of the true church, the tenth rule directing, that the members shall be "selected from Christians of various denominations."

The providence which led to the formation of this Society was somewhat remarkable, and is interestingly detailed by its early historian.*

In the beginning of the year 1749-50 an earthquake threw the inhabitants of London into deep consternation. Tears were their drink by day, trembling and horror their companions by night. He with whom is the result of natural causes, and who had predisposed them when he laid the foundations of the earth, within five weeks from the first shock, lifted up this mighty city again from its basis, and shook

* Origin and Progress of the Society, by Dr. Rippon, 1796.

its million of inhabitants in all their dwellings. The second shock, it is said, was more dreadful than the first, and the nation fearing, asked, May not a third be more terrible than the second? Conscious guilt, common sense, and the genuine piety of anxious thousands, said, the houses already twice trembling within a few weeks, may this hour fall, and crush every soul of us, sinners and saints, beneath their ruins.*

At this awful crisis "came forward an individual, to improve the alarm of Providence; that person was Mr. Benjamin Forfitt, a pious

* In the midst of a distress so deep, "that the like is not recorded to have happened before in this careless city," places of worship were crowded with frightened sinners, especially the two Wesleyan chapels and the Tabernacle. Mr. Whitefield preached at midnight in Hyde Park. "One knows not which most to admire," remarks Mr. Watson, "Mr. Whitefield preaching at midnight in Hyde Park to a crowd of affrighted people, expecting the earth to swallow them up, or Mr. Charles Wesley, with the very ground reeling under him, calling out to his congregation, 'Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and the hills be carried into the midst of the sea, for the Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge,' and using this as his text."—Wesley's Life, by Watson, page 212.

tradesman in Leadenhall-street, and a member of a Dissenting church then under the pastoral care of Dr. William Langford, and since of the Rev. John Clayton. Convinced of the immense value of his own soul, and of the souls of men, Mr. Forfitt longed to furnish them with suitable means of information, and persuaded himself that Bibles and other religious books must be successful under the Divine blessing."

Many of the most excellent men of the times immediately became the warm supporters of the institution. Among the preachers who advocated its claim from the pulpit were Jones, of St. Laurence Jury, the immortal Whitefield, Romaine, Venn, John Newton, and Rowland Hill, of the Established church, and Gibbons, Stennett, Brewer, Conder, Palmer, Addington, Toller, Clayton, and many others, from the different sections of the nonconformists. It is an interesting fact, "that the very first donation made by this Society was to Dr. Doddridge, in September, 1750," and it is stated that at that period "there were thousands of families in this land, which had not a single Bible; and that there were *many dissenting congregations* which had but a few."

This Society has distributed many excellent

works, which have been useful both to the Christian and the unbeliever. Mr. Hill's "Village Dialogues" were placed on its catalogue a few years before the author's death. He gave £300 to the institution, as an evidence of his love to its liberal principles.

In 1785 "The Society for the Support and Encouragement of Sunday Schools" was established, through the agency of William Fox, "who by indefatigable zeal roused the public mind to their value and importance, by means of extensive epistolary correspondence, by the publication of various papers through the metropolitan and provincial press, and at public meetings called for the purpose."

Among the zealous supporters of this new Society was Rowland Hill, who acted in Christian harmony with the beloved Bishop Porteus, William Romaine, Henry Foster, John Newton, and Abraham Booth, aided by the generous efforts of Jonas Hanway, Henry Thornton, William Wilberforce, and other illustrious laymen. In this Society the affections of Mr. Hill were secured, because its committee had stated, that "private advantage and party zeal were entirely disclaimed by the friends and promoters of the institution. However men might

be divided into political parties, or however Christians might unhappily separate from each other on account of difference of sentiment, there they were all invited to join the common cause, the glory of God, the good of their country, and the happiness of their fellow-creatures." Half the committee, by the rules of the Society, are members of the Church of England, and half Protestant Dissenters.

The formation of the London Missionary Society deeply interested the mind of Mr. Hill. The subject had occupied the serious attention of several devoted men, on whose minds the Spirit of the Lord evidently rested. In 1793 the Warwickshire Association of ministers had discussed the question, "What is the duty of Christians with respect to the spread of the gospel?" when they determined that the evening of the first Monday of every month should be a season of united prayer to God for the success of every attempt made by all denominations of Christians for the spread of the gospel.*

About this time a number of Christians in Edinburgh, "excited by a desire for the spread

* Life of Rev George Burder, page 157.

of the gospel, agreed to join together in prayer for that purpose. These meetings were conducted on such a plan as not to interfere with the duties of the family and the closet. They met at seven o'clock on the Sabbath mornings, and continued about an hour and a half, during which time three or four members usually prayed. They made known their plan, and urged the people of God everywhere to adopt similar measures. Who knows, said they, what may be the result? At any rate, it may tend to increase our own esteem for the inestimable blessing of the gospel of peace."*

The late Dr. Bogue and his friends had their attention directed to the same important point. In 1794 he was supplying the Tabernacle at Bristol, a place dear to thousands who had there heard the gospel from the lips of Whitefield and Hill, when the subject received serious consideration. The parlour of the Tabernacle house is called by some the cradle of the London Missionary Society," for there Mr. Hey, who was at that time pastor of the Independent congregation in Castle Green, Bristol, joined with Dr. Bogue and Mr. Steven, minister of the

* Evangelical Magazine, Vol. iii. p. 468.

Scotch church in Covent Garden, London, who was Dr. Bogue's colleague in the Tabernacle pulpit, in attempting to rouse the public mind to the neglected duty. Dr. Bogue inserted in the Evangelical Magazine for September, 1794, an address to Evangelical dissenters who practised infant baptism, which awakened considerable attention to missions.*

At a meeting held at the Red Cross Street Library, the Rev. John Eyre, of Homerton, fell into conversation with several of the Scotch ministers of London, Messrs. Waugh, Love, and Steven, on a publication which the Rev. Melville Horne had recently sent forth, to rouse attention to Missions. Mr. Eyre, on his return from the Library, called on the Rev. Matthew Wilks, minister of the Tabernacle, Moorfields, and communicated to him the conversation, with the powerful effect the subject had produced. These two ministers resolved to meet again, when each was to bring a friend with him. Their number having augmented to seven or nine persons, it was agreed to meet once a fortnight at the Castle and Falcon, Aldersgate-street, for prayer, and the reading

* Life of Dr. Bogue, pages 170, 177.

of the Scriptures on the subject. After several meetings, publicity was given to the subject, and a public meeting was summoned for Monday, the 21st of September, 1795, to be held at that tavern.

On that occasion about two hundred ministers, of different denominations, met together, when the Missionary Society was formed. Sir Egerton Leigh, Bart. presided.

In these preliminary services we find our venerable friend, Mr. Hill, associated with Eyre, Love, and Haweis, of the Establishment; Sibree, of Frome; Lambert, of Hull; Cook, of Maidenhead; Kingsbury, of Southampton; Hey, of Bristol; Bogue, of Gosport; Greatheed, of Newport Pagnel; Saltern, of Bridport; Waugh, Wilks, and Hunter, of London; Burder, then of Coventry; Parsons, of Leeds; Lowell, of Woodridge; Sloper, of Devizes; Whitridge, of Oswestry; Slatterie, of Chatham; Ralph, of Maidstone; Jay, of Bath; Rooker, of Goldhill; Townsend, of Ramsgate; Griffin, of Portsea; Ray, of Sudbury; and many other excellent men.

On Thursday morning, the 24th of September, Mr. Hill preached for the Society at Surrey

Chapel, from Matthew xxiv. 14,—in which he gave the following beautiful sketch of a devoted Missionary's character, — "What manner of persons should these indeed be, in all holy conversation and godliness! How full of that heavenly-mindedness and spiritual-mindedness, which shall raise them so far above the world, as though they scarce had an existence in it! What a holy, burning zeal, for the salvation of souls! and what wisdom from above, to conduct that zeal! what purity of knowledge, to deal with those whose deep-rooted fondness for their ancient superstitions will make them watch, with a jealous eye, over every attempt to declare among them the truth as it is in Jesus.

"Nor should their patience, meekness, and child-like simplicity be less eminent than their zeal. They must win by love, and conquer by holy perseverance. They must not be like some sort of Missionaries, who suppose they are to be sent a pleasant voyage at the public expense; but they must be men 'that count not their lives dear unto themselves, so that they may finish their course with joy, and the ministry which they have received of the Lord.' Men that can be contented, out of

pure love to Christ, to 'stand in jeopardy every hour.' They must not only *live* like martyrs, but perhaps *die* like martyrs. We know not but the ancient proverb of the primitive Christians is again to be revived, 'the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.' They must be as dead to themselves as if they had no being; they must be completely crucified with Christ! In short, ere they embark upon the work, they must learn to leave themselves behind them. With holy triumph they must be taught to say, 'Farewell, my dear native land; farewell to all the ease and happiness, and earthly indulgencies, I have enjoyed therein. Welcome affliction, necessities, distresses of every kind; labours, watchings, fastings, I now dread no more. Welcome now a life to be spent in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils in the wilderness, in perils by the sea. Yea, welcome weariness and painfulness, hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness; yea, welcome death itself, whenever the blessed Lord himself, who died for me, demands that costly sacrifice at my hands. These are the men that shall be made more than conquerors over all the difficulties

that human prudence, or unbelief, would present before us to impede the way."*

In referring to the meetings held for the formation of this Society, the biographer of Dr. Bogue remarks, "The Christian world seemed to awake as from a dream—wondering that they could have been so long asleep, while the groans of a dying world were calling upon them for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Another consideration, which rendered these seasons unspeakably delightful was, the visible union of Christians of all denominations; who, for the first time, forgetting their party prejudices and partialities, assembled in the same place, sang the same hymns, united in the same prayers, and felt themselves one in Christ." This sentiment was so generally felt, that when Mr. Bogue, in the course of his sermon, said, "We are called upon, this evening, to the funeral of bigotry; and I hope it will be buried so deep, as never to rise again," the whole vast body of people manifested their concurrence, and could scarcely refrain from one general shout of joy. Such a scene, perhaps, was never,

* Gospel Grace.

beheld in our world; and afforded a glorious earnest of that nobler assembly, where we shall meet all the redeemed, and before the throne of the Lamb shall sing, as in the last hymn of the service, "Crown him, crown him, crown him Lord of all."*

Mr. Hill so heartily rejoiced in these remarks on the funeral of bigotry, that he undertook to write a suitable epitaph. The following lines are from his pen:—

Here lies old Bigotry, abhorr'd
By all that love our common Lord;
No more his influence shall prove
The torment of the sons of love.

We celebrate with holy mirth
This monster's death, of hellish birth;
Ne'er may his hateful influence rise,
Again to blast our sacred joys.

Glory to God we now are one,
United to one Head alone;
With undivided hearts we praise
Our God, for his uniting grace.

Let names, and sects, and parties fall,
Let Jesus Christ be all in all;
Thus, like thy saints above, shall we
Be one with each, as one with Thee.

* Life of Dr. Bogue, p. 179.

There is reason to fear that there has been a resurrection of this enemy of the church; but till the close of life, Mr. Hill often repeated the remark of a favourite author, "Mr. Bigotry fell down, and broke his leg—would that he had broken his neck!"

The annual collections at Surrey Chapel, for the Missionary cause, were liberal, sometimes exceeding £400. A Female Missionary Association has also raised about £2000 for the same object. Mr. Hill continued, through life, the zealous friend of the institution, and travelled more than ten thousand miles, advocating its cause, and frequently contributed liberally towards the expenses necessarily incurred.

The Missionary day at Surrey Chapel was a high day, both for ministers and people. Mr. Hill was all activity, preparing for the service. He generally read the prayers, and felt much joy "that his non.-con. brethren, once in the year, heard the beautiful liturgy of the church of England." An aged minister, who was much opposed to formularies and instrumental music, was once present. He made some remarks against the service to the friends near him: just then the congregation sang,

"The *thunder* of thy word shall roll,"

and there was a fine imitation of thunder on the organ. "Oh! said the good man, how I do hate this attempt at theatrical effect, and yet how truly sublime it is!"

Mr. Hill corresponded with several of the devoted men who had engaged in the Missionary work, and especially with those who had been members of his own church. He felt a deep interest in their welfare and success. On the departure of the Rev. Richard Knill for Russia, he addressed to him the following letter:—

"To my well-beloved brother, Richard Knill; grace, mercy, and peace be with him, through our Lord Jesus Christ. 'Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.'

Commission'd from the Lord of hosts,
Herald of God, go forth and shine;
Proclaim the light where darkness reigns,
Prove all the strength of Jesus thine.

Girt with the panoply of God,
Go, dare the dreadful powers of sin;
Go, urge the lingering battle on,
And never-fading honours win.

Wield the tremendous sword of truth,
While hell's dark legions trembling stand;
To hear the Conqueror's dire decree,
And feel the vengeance of his hand.

To northern climes those tidings bear,
Which bring lost sinners near to God,
And bid Siberian heathens know
The power and grace of Jesu's blood.

Nor let thy fears presume to quell
The holy flame that swells thine heart;
Strength, more than equal to the day,
The great Jehovah will impart.

In weakness shall thy strength be found,
While unbelief will shrink away:
While sinners burst the bonds of death,
And rise to bless the Gospel day.

Vale in Christo, amicissime frater, iterumque vale.
Oct. 9, 1820. ROWLAND HILL, aged 76.

The writer once attended a Missionary Prayer Meeting with Mr. Hill, when he gave a very characteristic description of a Missionary to savage and unenlightened nations. "We want men of good plain sense in their heads, and plenty of grace in their hearts,—men who can make a good wheelbarrow, and

talk to the inquisitive heathen about the love of Christ, all the time they are knocking it together."

The Religious Tract Society is also connected with the history of Mr. Hill. In the year 1799, the Rev. George Burder mentioned to him his wish to form a Society for the publication of cheap and small religious books. The design was immediately sanctioned; and after the Missionary Sermon was preached at Surrey Chapel in that year, Mr. Burder, from the pulpit, requested the attendance of the ministers present in the vestry. There he unfolded his plan, — when it was agreed to have an adjourned meeting on the following morning, the 9th of May, at the St. Paul's Coffee House. The friends met, when Mr. Thomas Wilson presided, and the matter was further discussed. At an adjourned meeting held on the same day, Mr. Hill was called to the chair, when the rules of the Society were adopted. On this occasion he displayed much of his native humour. He objected to the term "'*Religious* Tract Society,'" and wished "Christian" to be substituted, as less likely to have a canting appearance; but his objection was overruled.

"The beginning of this Society was small, but its latter end has greatly increased. It was then in its infancy, but it was an infant Hercules; or, rather, it resembled the spring-head of some mighty river, hardly awakening notice at its first bubbling up, but increasing its waters, forming channels in every direction for their flow, and, swollen by an accession of tributary streams, enriching, fertilizing, and refreshing, by its pure and vital current almost every country of the globe."*

A few weeks only before the death of Mr. Hill, he had an interview with two of the friends connected with the Society, when he expressed his anxiety that the Committee should adopt his "Village Dialogues," or portions of them, on the list of the Society's publications,—seeing how extensively they were distributed in all parts of the world. The excellent man rejoiced, when he heard that an institution, which he fostered at its commencement, had circulated, in eighty languages, nearly two hundred millions of copies of its books and tracts. He was not only its steady friend for more than thirty years, but just

* Leifchild's Life of Rev. Joseph Hughes, p. 179.

before his death he presented £200 to its funds. He was the author of the tracts, "Thomas Steady and John Wild;" and "Four Dialogues in Prison."

In the Committee of the Religious Tract Society, all the preliminary measures were discussed and settled, which led to the formation of "The British and Foreign Bible Society." The extensive usefulness of that institution, and the deep interest felt in every circumstance connected with its rise and progress, will justify the introduction of some particulars connected with it, which have not been fully detailed in any previous work.

On Tuesday, the 7th of December, 1802, the first step was taken to raise this noble edifice. At a meeting of the Committee of the Religious Tract Society on that day, when the late Matthew Wilks presided, and the venerable John Townsend, Joseph Hughes, Dr. Steinkopff, and Mr. Charles, of Bala, were present, with several excellent laymen; the following minute was entered, "Mr. Charles, of Bala, having introduced the subject, which had been previously mentioned by Mr. Tarn, of dispersing Bibles in Wales, the Committee resolved, that it would be highly desirable to stir up the

public mind to the dispersion of Bibles generally, and that a paper in a Magazine, to this effect, may be singularly useful. The object was deemed sufficiently connected with this Society, thus generally to appear on these minutes, and the Secretary, who suggested it,* was accordingly desired to enter it."

From this little spring arose that mighty river, whose spiritual waters are now flowing through the world, and causing the deserts in many places "to rejoice and blossom as the rose." Let us, however, trace its gradual progress. On the 21st of December, Mr. Hughes read a paper on the importance of forming a Society for the distribution of Bibles in various languages; and on the 28th of the same month, when Mr. Hill was present, "the object of the intended Society was maturely considered, and determined unanimously to be, "To promote the circulation of the Holy Scriptures in foreign countries, and in those parts of the British dominions for which adequate provision is not made, it being understood that no English translation of the Scrip-

* The Rev. Joseph Hughes, Secretary of the Religious Tract Society.

tures shall be gratuitously circulated by the Society in Great Britain."

In January, 1803, this important subject being resumed, the address prepared by Mr. Hughes was received, and the outlines of a plan prepared by Mr. Mills was read, and, with some alterations, adopted. In February, a little advance was made in the object, when it was determined that the Society should be "for promoting a more extensive circulation of the Holy Scriptures at home and abroad," and it was resolved "that the translation of the Scriptures established by public authority, be the only one in the English language to be adopted by the Society." The friends present at this meeting resolved to apply to his Majesty to become the Patron of the Society, and Mr. Wilberforce was to be consulted on the subject.

At this period the friends of the new cause were greatly stimulated by a letter received from Mr. Keisling, of Nurenberg, in Germany. He was a merchant, who annually travelled through a considerable part of that country, in the prosecution of his business. In his letter, he described, in very affecting terms, the great difficulty under which the poor

laboured, in procuring Bibles, and the eager desire manifested by persons of all ages to be supplied with the word of life. He lamented the inadequacy of his own means to satisfy their pressing wants, and expressed his hope that the friends of religion in England would afford him that aid, without which they would remain unrelieved. This communication led the Committee, by the advice of Mr. Wilberforce, to adopt measures to ascertain the want of the Scriptures, both at home and abroad; and Dr. Steinkopff, who was about to visit the continent, was requested by the Committee to obtain all the information he could upon the subject. He afterwards presented to the Society an interesting report of the want of the Bible in Germany and Switzerland.

At the Fourth Annual Meeting of the Religious Tract Society, which was held at Saint Paul's Coffee-house, on the 12th of May, 1803, the Secretary, Mr. Hughes, stated, "that it was in the contemplation of some respectable friends to form an extensive plan for the diffusion of Bibles into the hands of such persons as were unable to procure them. He requested the members of the Society who were present, to inquire in their respective vicinities, as to

the facility of procuring Bibles, and to communicate such information to the Society."

At this meeting, the late John Townsend, in an impressive address, urged the necessity of a diligent attention to the want of Bibles, both in England and the continent, and Dr. Bogue, of Gosport, suggested the propriety of printing the Scriptures in the modern Greek language, should a Society be formed for the noble purpose of extending the distribution of the Divine Word.

Mr. Hill was continued on the Committee of the Tract Society, by the choice of the friends of the institution assembled at its fourth anniversary, and took a lively interest in every step which was taken to spread the knowledge of Scriptural truth through the world.

An interesting circumstance is recorded in the minutes of the Religious Tract Society, on the 28th of June, 1803, which, perhaps, was the first suggestion which led to the subsequent formation of Auxiliary Societies. The minute is in these words: "A letter from the Rev. Mr. Williams, of Birmingham, being read, in which he suggests the propriety of encouraging the formation of Local Societies, to which poor persons might be permitted to pay for Bibles,

by instalments of one penny, &c. per week, the prices being further reduced by the aid of such society,—Resolved, that the consideration of the same be deferred till the formation of the Society be accomplished." The Secretary, in a tract which he prepared, "on the necessity of a more extensive circulation of the Scriptures," was requested to notice the suggestion of Mr. Williams, relative to small societies.

In January, 1804, a special meeting was held "for the purpose of promoting the Bible Society," — when it was resolved, "That the title of the Society should be 'The British and Foreign Bible Society,' agreeably to the suggestion of the Secretary,* and 'that a circular letter, on the subject, should be prepared by the Secretary of the Tract Society.'"

The first intimation that the members of the Society of Friends would concur in the object of the institution, was communicated to the Committee in March, 1804, when Mr. Reyner mentioned "that from a conversation he had with Robert Howard, Esq., he had reason to conclude that several respectable members of the Society called Quakers, would attend at

* The Rev. Joseph Hughes, A. M.

the proposed meeting, and exert themselves in behalf of so excellent an object."

The measures which have been thus minutely detailed, led to the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society, on the 7th of March, 1804, when Granville Sharp, esq. presided. It is a pleasing fact, that the first donation received by the new Society was £20 from Mr. D. Dale, of Glasgow, to assist the venerable Oberlin to circulate the Scriptures among his poor people in the Ban de la Roche.

A Bible Association was formed at Surrey Chapel in the year 1812, which has circulated 16,878 copies of the Holy Word, and contributed £3360 to the general funds.

No one rejoiced more than Mr. Hill did in the prosperity and usefulness of the Bible Society. He was grateful for its long and uninterrupted union, and deeply sympathized with its supporters, when in circumstances of trial and difficulty. He was its steady and unchangeable friend when the storm and the tempest beat upon it, and strictly adhered to its fundamental principles. At a public meeting, where a right reverend prelate presided, he referred to the points in dispute, and added, "Why, my

lord, I would take a Bible from the devil himself at the end of a pair of tongs, and thank him for it, though I should call him a fool for his pains."

The mind of Mr. Hill was always deeply pained when he heard ministers attempt to justify their attendance at a Bible meeting. "He had once heard," he remarked, "of a clergyman who had apologized for being present at a Bible meeting. Apologize for attending at a Bible meeting! Why, he ought then to apologize for reading his liturgy, for that is full of the Bible; he ought to apologize for reading the Psalms, which he repeated at least four times in a month; he ought to apologize for reading the Lessons, the Gospels, and the Epistles; in fact, if he discharged his duty as a clergyman, he would have constant apologies to make, for a great part of his duty consisted in reading the Scriptures."

But the most interesting scene in connexion with the Society was at its anniversary in 1831, when much confusion arose from an attempt then made to alter its fundamental principle. The scene resembled the troubled sea; the longer the meeting continued, the louder the billows of opposition roared. Holy men were

weeping,—mistaken brethren were unintentionally driving the noble vessel on the sands,—the enemies of religious truth were rejoicing, and saying, "So would we have it." In the midst of this scene of indescribable confusion, the venerable Rowland Hill arose. The calming effect produced was instantaneous. The secret prayer had ascended to the great Head of the church from the sincere friends of the Society, and the voice of supplication was heard; and, through the well-timed remarks of the aged advocate, peace was restored.

Mr. Hill had a peculiar talent for the platform. He had a ready command of his powers, and his choice wit and beautiful imagination always furnished him with suitable matter. His speeches were short, but much to the point. He had a great objection to long speeches, which, to use his own language, "contained a river of words with only a spoonful of thoughts." He considered that the representatives of religious institutions were the only persons who had license to intrude upon the public meeting at any great length. The following letter on this subject will interest the reader; it was a reply to an invitation to preside at a meeting in Surrey Chapel.

" Wotton, Sept. 20, 1826.

" My dear Friend,

" An old man in the 83d year of his age ought to be a little provident of his remaining strength. You will say, no bodily strength can be needed, to sit quietly in a chair at a public meeting. True, but no small degree of patience is needed, while the poor chairman must sit it out for three hours at least, to hear many a tiresome long speech, (if they are not all of the same sort,) without any remedy or redress, upon the high fidgets, above half the time gaping and watching the clock. In most of these public meetings I have been tired down before they have been half over, and have been obliged to sheer off with the remains of my patience, and leave the finishing to others, while nothing but a short speech might have been expected from me.

" In the way in which too many of these sort of meetings are now conducted, I have my fears that many a good cause is injured by the means adopted for their support. Though some may be gratified by what may be said to the point, yet oh the dulness, the circumlocutiousness, the conceit, the tautology, &c. &c. of others. In short, few know how to be pithy, short, and

sweet. And as I find it very difficult to be pithy and sweet, my refuge at all times is to be short. Pity, therefore, a poor old man, and let him not be sentenced to suffer such a sort of pillory punishment, and try if you cannot persuade some other good-tempered sinner to suffer in his stead.

"Your's very sincerely and affectionately,

"ROWLAND HILL."

"To Mr. William Jones."

The individual support which Mr. Hill rendered to the benevolent institutions of the day was not sufficient to satisfy his liberal mind. Immediately after the erection of Surrey Chapel he was anxious to train up his newly formed congregation to the habit of "devising liberal things," and he did not labour in vain in effecting his object. His church became a local blessing,—a fountain whence the waters of life flowed to refresh the neighbouring wilderness. It was a repositcry to which "the lame, the halt, the sick, and the blind" repaired, and met with a rich supply for all their temporal necessities. The annual contributions at Surrey Chapel for many years averaged nearly £2000,

in addition to the subscriptions for supporting the preaching the Gospel.

Soon after the opening of the chapel, namely, on the 1st of January, 1784, Mr. Hill formed the Benevolent Society, for the relief of the afflicted poor at their own habitations. The catholic spirit of the founder is seen in the advice he gave, and the objects he pointed out as worthy of the Society's attention. He laid it down as a rule, that none were to be excluded on account of the sect or party to which they happened to belong. The suffering Catholic and distressed Protestant were alike the objects of the Society's pity. The Visitors were to be selected from "those persons supposed to be the most godly and judicious," who were to speak to the persons they visited "in a meek and humble spirit, in the fear of God, concerning the salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ; recommending them to God in fervent prayer; ever bearing in their minds that the immortal soul was of infinitely greater importance than the temporary relief of the perishable body." The Visitors were also requested "to observe how far the habitations and apparel of the persons they visited appeared cleanly and decent. Such as these

would profit by the Society, and should be liberally assisted; while others, who were filthy and squalid, give sufficient evidence that they were sunk so low, as to render any efforts to do them good without the least probability of ultimate success."

Mr. Hill was greatly attached to this Society. It suited the natural kindness of his heart. Its anniversary was always held on the evening of New Year's day, on which occasion a sermon was preached for the charity, and a selection from the cases relieved during the year was read, accompanied by powerful comments and appeals from Mr. Hill. After the cases were finished, the sacrament was administered "to the members of all Christian churches present." It was quite clear that "this communion of saints," called out the most affectionate feelings of Mr. Hill's mind. Many friends can recall the manner in which he would exclaim, "Come, let us sing our fine dedication hymn, at the beginning of another year,—

Here, Lord, we give ourselves away,
Our souls to thee resign;
Oh may each moment of our lives
For evermore be thine."

The collections on these occasions often exceeded £100. These seasons of spiritual

communion will long be remembered by many who were privileged to be present.

The Benevolent Society has visited, up to the 1st of January, 1835, about 40,466 distressed families, containing, perhaps, more than 200,000 persons, and has expended, on this object alone, upwards of £23,000. It is a memorable fact, that during the fifty years the Society has been in operation, it has not lost one of its Visitors, through the raging fever, or other infectious diseases which often prevailed in the families they visited. The promise of God has been graciously fulfilled in their experience. "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee." The reports of the Society have contained abundant evidence that "its labours have not been in vain in the Lord."

The Sunday-school cause appears to be the next object which engaged the attention of Mr. Hill. The appeals made by Mr. Raikes, of Gloucester, on this subject, were not in vain. Our friend, however, had to meet the conscientious opposition of some good people on the subject. "There were many," he remarks, "who had some scruples whether such schools were not an infringement on the sacred services of the Sabbath. They soon perceived, how-

ever, that as religious instruction was designed to be united with erudition, they were well calculated for the general good; and this brought about a most happy agreement among all parties, to unite in promoting the better education of youth."*

Under the auspices of Mr. Hill, the first Sunday-school was established in the metropolis. There are no records in existence which shew the exact time of its opening. Middelton, in his Ecclesiastical Memoir,† states it was in 1784, which must have been about the time, for in 1827, at a meeting of the old scholars, which had been educated in the school, an elderly female stated that her first serious impressions were received in that place about forty-two years previous to that period, and although they had subsided for a time, yet they had, by the mercy of God, been again revived, she trusted, to her everlasting benefit.‡

* Apology for Sunday Schools, p. 29. † Page 210.

‡ In a funeral sermon preached by the Rev. Mr. Harris, on the death of the Superintendent of the Hoxton Sunday-school, the preacher remarks, "To Mr. Kemp belongs the honour of having established the second Sunday-school in London; this institution having been preceded in its formation by that alone which is connected with Surrey chapel.

The children were first collected in the chapel, and afterwards in a school-house adjoining; where they were instructed by paid teachers and superintendents, for nearly twenty years; but under this system there was but little prosperity. There was the want of that generous and hallowed feeling, which is produced by the disinterested labours of instructors who are constrained by the love of Christ freely to give what they have freely received. The labours of these friends were not altogether in vain; others were raised up, who came forward, and "without money and without price," imparted to the young the knowledge of the Divine Redeemer. Among these devoted labourers were some of the most attached friends of Mr. Hill. The names of Sims, over whose grave the pastor of Surrey Chapel was seen to weep, when he exclaimed, "There lies an honest Shoemaker;" John Gibbs, who died in 1824; Hugh Beams, one of the fruits of Mr. Hill's ministry, who left the world a little before him; William Bridges, who died in 1809; and Burchett, who was removed in 1810; are names that will never be forgotten, in connexion with the early history of the institution. Mr. Beams took the office of Superintendent of

the Surrey Chapel School, in 1807, on the retirement of Mr. Coleman, its first manager. When Mr. Beams, in 1808, became the Secretary of the Southwark Sunday-school Society, he was succeeded in the superintendency by the late excellent Benjamin Neale, who became a peculiar blessing to the children. The grace of God had early changed his heart. In the fatigue of committees and societies for the promotion of the Gospel, his labour and strength were usefully and most cheerfully expended. He was remarkable for his touching, simple, and perfectly natural, but oftentimes powerful eloquence. This life of usefulfulness, however, was short.* He lives in the hearts of many grateful pupils, whom he was the means of leading to God. He was once asked how it was that the teachers always obeyed his wishes; when he replied, "I am a tyrant, but they know it not; I rule, but never shew my sceptre." A rapid decline carried him off on the 6th of August, 1816, in the thirtieth year of his age.

* Memoir of Rev. Cornelius Neale, M. A., by Rev. W. Jowett, M. A p. 3.

He sleeps, oh! how kindly! on Jesus's breast;
Never more the sick dreamings shall trouble his rest;
And her lips that would healing and comfort restore,
Shall burn his cold lips and cold cheeks never more.

Weep not, that so soon he is gone to be blest;
He gave to his God the first hours and the last;
Can the labourer cease from his labour too soon?
He wrought all the morning, and rested at noon.

We gather the flower when full in its bloom,
While brightest in colour, and best in perfume;
And the victim was given to God, in old time,
Without spot, without blemish, a male in his prime.*

The late Colonel Handfield, of the Ordnance Office, who died in 1821, was for many years the teacher of the Bible class. Two gentlemen holding responsible offices in the East India House, and the Board of Controul for the affairs of India, had the care of the Testament classes; and several professional gentlemen were engaged in the same interesting work. Mr. Hill felt grateful to the kind providence of God, in raising up these excellent men to assist

* Lines to his Mother, on the death of Mr. B. Neale, Jowett's Life of Rev. Cornelius Neale, p. 4.

him in training up the youthful poor in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

At the close of the last century, the Sunday-school cause was greatly enlarged, through the instrumentality of Mr. James Robert Burchett, a proctor in Doctors' Commons, whose name has been already mentioned. He was truly devoted to the Sunday-school work. "A seemingly insignificant object," remarks his biographer, "and fortuitous circumstances, were the means of directing his attention to the subject. In the spring of the year 1799, after attending at Surrey Chapel, he was walking home with a friend, and discoursing upon the sermon they had heard. Mr. Hill had been mentioning the great good effected in Scotland, (which he had visited a little time before,) by Sabbath-schools, and made a very powerful appeal to his congregation, to go and imitate their Scottish brethren. Mr. Burchett's ardent mind immediately caught the idea, and began to consider how it might be best accomplished. Mr. B——'s friend offered the use of one of his rooms; and, remembering that whatever we do, should be done with all our might, they agreed to open a Sunday-school the next Lord's day. At this stage of the conversation,

Mr. Cranfield* called at Mr. Burchett's. On his entering the room, Mr. Burchett exclaimed, "I am glad to see you: we have just been contriving a plan to open a Sunday-school,—but I recollect you have one already in Kent-street; perhaps we had better endeavour to enlarge your border." Mr. C—— welcomed the idea, and complained that he had been for some time without assistance. They accordingly visited him the following Sabbath, and found him labouring alone with about forty children. They inquired whether children would readily attend; to which Mr. C—— replied, that he would engage to collect a considerable number; and they agreed, on their part, to supply them with teachers. A sufficient number was soon procured from Surrey Chapel; but the school was no sooner filled with children, than they were forcibly struck with the destitute condition of many other parts of the Borough, and shortly after a room was hired in the Mint, then the lowest and most depraved neighbourhood in Southwark.

* Called Campbell in the Memoir of Burchett.—This worthy man is still living, and is bringing forth fruit in old age. He continues to be most actively engaged in the vineyard of the Lord.

This, too, was speedily filled, and they proceeded to open another school in Gravel Lane, and one in Garden Row, Saint George's Fields. Children flocked in great numbers; and five hundred were quickly taken from the streets, and brought under the means of instruction. Hitherto they had not solicited any subscriptions from the public, Mr. Burchett having made himself responsible for all expenses. All this was done in the summer of 1799; and when Mr. Hill returned to town in the autumn, his patronage was solicited, and readily obtained. He rejoiced exceedingly in the object; and, "Since," said he, "you have undertaken to provide teachers and children, I will find the requisite money." He recommended them to form a junction with the school which had long been formed at Surrey Chapel, and the whole was denominated "The Southwark Sunday-school Society."

Mr. Burchett was not content with the services which his counsel and his purse rendered to the Society, but he was for many years a zealous teacher in any of the schools where his labours were most wanted; and Sabbath after Sabbath he was seen surrounded by a number of poor children, teaching them their

alphabet, and tenderly imparting to them the first principles of the doctrines of Christ. At the time of his death, in 1810, there were eight schools, containing nearly two thousand children.* These useful institutions have continued to multiply, so that there are now twelve schools in connexion with the Society, containing about two thousand six hundred children. The annual income, including collections, amounts to nearly £250.

Upwards of sixty thousand children have already been trained up in these schools, and many cheering facts of usefulness have come to the knowledge of the teachers. From these nurseries of the church several ministers and missionaries have gone forth to preach the Gospel. Not long before the removal of Mr. Hill, many encouraging circumstances transpired. On one Sabbath-day, the clerk of Surrey Chapel announced, from his desk, the ordination services of a pious young man, who was about to proceed to a foreign land. He had been a scholar in the Surrey Chapel School. The minister then supplying the pulpit had been trained up in the same place, and also in the same class. At the ordi-

* Memoir of Burchett, Evan. Mag., 1812, p. 165.

nance of the Lord's supper, held about that time, a young woman whispered to an old teacher, who happened to be next to her, "I had never been here, had it not been for your address from the words, "I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me." A very large proportion of the teachers now engaged in the schools were once scholars themselves.

One interesting circumstance connected with Sunday-schools, Mr. Hill often mentioned.—

"I remember a poor man once met me in the street, and, giving me a little bit of paper, he asked, 'Will you be so good as to read this for me?' Can't you read yourself? I inquired. 'No, Sir; I was born in the days in which there were no Sunday-schools; but my children can read very prettily, and they read to us after I have done my labour; and we were never so happy, as since we have taken to read religious books, to look into our Bibles, and to pray that we may be governed by their contents.'"

In addition to the usual plans adopted in Sunday-schools, several novel efforts have been made by the Committee of the Southwark Schools, to increase their usefulness.

1. *Fragment Schools.*—These were opened in the most destitute districts, and children were gathered together from the very lowest orders. Shoes, and a kind of smock-frock, were furnished them on the Saturday evening, which were returned on the Monday morning. The teachers were anxious to gather up the fragments, that nothing might be lost. These efforts were long continued, but it was found that but few of such children would endure discipline,—at the same time some continued, or removed to other schools, when these special efforts were no longer required.

2. *Select Classes.* These have been established for the reception of those children whose age renders it necessary for them to leave the schools. In these classes they continue to derive the benefits of religious instruction under experienced teachers, who sometimes instruct them at their own houses on the Sabbath afternoons. The young persons admitted are from fifteen to twenty years of age, a period when the character often assumes the form which it retains through life.

3. *Meetings of Old Scholars.* In the Surrey Chapel school, these meetings are held on the

last Thursday evening in October. The day is therefore well known to all the children. Sometimes more than one hundred old scholars take tea with those who first instructed them in the ways of the Lord. After free conversation, a suitable address is given by the friend who presides. The *written* communications of the females, and the verbal statements of the young men, have often verified a remark of Mr. Hill's, "that where the grace of God is communicated, it marvellously improves the understanding," and have given cheering evidence, that "our labours have not been in vain in the Lord."

In 1801, Mr. Hill published "An Apology for Sunday-schools," in which he not only answered the objections raised by some good people, but replied to the violent attacks of the then Bishop of Rochester. The catholicity of the Sunday-school system had won the affections of the writer. He remarks, "We neither design to make the children voluntarily committed to our care Churchmen or Dissenters, but Christians. In this grand design, therefore, we drop all names but that of Christian, and direct the children not to be dissenters from the Church, but dissenters from sin, leaving all

lesser matters to their own decision on a future day.

In his attachment to the cause of education, Mr. Hill never changed, but, after long and careful consideration, he remarked, "The more I look at the matter, the more satisfied I am that the reign of education is the reign of order and happiness, and that to promote it is an injunction arising out of the essence of Christianity itself."*

Mr. Hill frequently referred to a conversation he had on this subject with Sir John Sylvester, who was for many years Recorder of London. He inquired of the learned judge, "If he had discovered, among the crowds of young delinquents that had passed under his eye, whether the seeds of education had been sown." The Recorder's reply was, "I am quite persuaded that the want of education is one of the great disposing causes which fills our criminal calendar, for when young people are properly educated, I rarely find them become adepts in crime."

Mr. Hill had an annual assemblage of the

* British and Foreign School Society, 1827.

Sunday-school children of London on Easter Monday and Tuesday, when he composed a suitable hymn for the occasion, which he printed and gratuitously distributed. These little compositions were much valued by the young people, who were addressed from the text of Scripture printed at the head of the hymn. Mr. Hill generally gained their attention, and many of them heard to the saving of their souls. Mr. Weight, in his funeral sermon for Mr. Hill, mentions, that on the Easter Tuesday, only two days preceding his death, he deeply regretted his inability to engage in his usual services. "He stood at his drawing-room window, and saw the dear little children thronging the chapel-yard, and spoke with much delight of bygone days, when he had met them, and preached to them the Lord Jesus Christ."

Mr. Hill's constant practice, which he continued till within a year or two of his death, was to visit the Sunday-school adjoining his chapel for a few minutes on a Sabbath afternoon. His presence cheered the teachers, whose services he often kindly acknowledged, and he frequently had an opportunity of admonishing the disobedient child. On leaving the school,

he proceeded to the vestry of his chapel, where the visitors of the sick were assembled together. There "the word in season" from the lips of a beloved pastor led them to fresh zeal in the work in which they were engaged.

The last ministerial effort which Mr. Hill made was in the cause of Sunday-schools. He had engaged to address the teachers of the South London Sunday-school Union, on Tuesday evening, the 2d of April, 1833, only eight days before his decease. Although he was in so weak a state, that he could scarcely ascend the pulpit, yet he was anxious to discharge this duty. He spoke with affectionate fervour about ten minutes. He became greatly exhausted, and finished his address and his ministry with his favourite and oft-repeated exhortation, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

In this last address, Mr. Hill referred to the subject of infant schools: "I did think, till I considered the subject more deeply, that we were carrying things a little too far, by the education of children in infant-schools. Now

I think otherwise, and feel that we cannot begin too early,—the earlier they are brought under a religious education the better."

The limits of this memoir prevent an enlarged statement of many other societies to which the venerable man felt attached. The British and Foreign School Society, and many others, were supported by him in life, nor did he forget, anonymously, to give them a substantial proof of his affection before he died. These institutions, formed on catholic principles, were considered by Mr. Hill the glory and safety of our land.

In attending to the wants of foreign lands, he did not neglect his own district and country. He felt that charity begins at home. There was, therefore, at Surrey Chapel, a Dorcas Society, for assisting poor married women in the season of confinement; and a Clothing Society, for supplying the deserving poor with wearing apparel at half the cost price. In addition to all these charities, Mr. Hill raised the needful funds for building twenty-four alms-houses for pious widows, connected with which is the school of industry, for the instruction and clothing of twenty-four poor children. In this, and in many other benevolent efforts, he received the cordial co-operation and liberal support of his esteemed

and beloved friend, John Broadley Wilson, esq. of Clapham.

The alms-houses are in the borough of Southwark, and are built in the Gothic style. The persons admitted into them must have been members of Christian churches for seven years, though it is not necessary that they should all of them belong to Surrey Chapel. The applicants bring satisfactory testimonials of moral and religious conduct, and when admitted they receive four shillings a week and a good supply of coals. At Wotton-under-Edge there are similar alms-houses for the aged females belonging to the Tabernacle.

The zeal and liberality of Mr. Hill were not confined to his own particular body. In the year 1808 he took a lively interest in the erection of a large and respectable chapel at Cheltenham, to which he liberally contributed. At this place Mr. Hill frequently preached during the summer months, when he was in Gloucestershire, and always excited considerable interest among the people. The Rev. John Brown has for many years been the minister of the place, and is deservedly beloved by his congregation.

The mind of Mr. Hill was greatly exercised in

his last days by his anxiety to assist a new interest in the town of Leamington in Warwickshire. For several years the services of the Church of England were read in the Independent chapel, in Clemens-street, but after mature deliberation the trustees considered it undesirable to continue the practice. A few persons seceded, and worshipped in a large room, where the liturgy was read, and afterwards they erected a neat and respectable chapel in Mill-street. A considerable debt was incurred, when an appeal for aid was made to Mr. Hill; and his mind was greatly moved by the plea, that the parties were suffering on account of their attachment to the liturgical service. He became the champion of this cause, and eventually advanced more than £2000 to redeem the chapel, and to erect and furnish a house for the minister. This property has been vested in trustees, with very positive directions, that the liturgy of the Church shall be constantly read. It is deeply to be regretted that Mr. Hill allowed this matter to alienate his affections from several ministers with whom he had been on the most brotherly terms. He charged them with possessing a sectarian spirit, because they did not see with him on the subject. The best

of men cannot always discern the beam which is in their own eye, though able to discover the defects of others. He referred to Leamington in a sermon preached a short time before his death, in which there are some pleasing remarks:

"I have endeavoured to establish the Gospel at Leamington, on the same plan that we have adopted at Surrey Chapel. A worthy clergyman came to me and said, "Would you not like to give it over to the Church?' 'Ay,' said I, 'with all my heart, if the Church people will let the Dissenters preach in it. We must sing together above, why not come a little closer while here below?' A good man once said to me, 'I want to be so near to every body, that we may all shake hands, and show what we are each to one another.' I am sure this is the spirit of Christ. I hope it will ever be the spirit of the people at Surrey Chapel."

A few extracts from letters written by Mr. Hill, in the year 1831, to the Rev. Edward Bates, who was then supplying the pulpit at Leamington, will shew the deep anxiety he felt for the prosperity of the new chapel, and also state his views on the ordination of ministers, and the necessity of their being devoted to God "in body, soul, and spirit."

'Surrey Chapel, March 12, 1831.

"It is desirable that you should be at Leamington as soon as you possibly can. The situation at that place is very important. I tremble whenever I go there. May God bless you with all that wisdom which is from above, that no man may despise thy youth. May the Lord enable you to live near to him in the spirit of your mind, and this will produce in you the best, the richest, and the most successful oratory from the pulpit. I wish to say more to you on this important subject."

" Surrey Chapel, May 24th, 1831.

"I seem persuaded God will make you a blessing so long as the Lord shall keep you in the dust before him. It will be no great criminality if I make one little alteration in the sacred volume: 'He filleth the *humble* with good things, but the *proud* he sendeth empty away.' Oh, that most lovely valley of humiliation, the safest, the most lovely, the most fertile spot between the city of destruction, and the celestial city! May you get into it, make your constant abode in it, and never get out of it, till from thence you shall be called to glory. Oh, I could say a thousand things concerning

this more than celestial valley,—the air is so salubrious, the ground so fertile, the fruit so wholesome and rich; while from the branches of every tree the voice of prayer, or praise, is heard, in delightful concert with each other. While living in this valley, no weapon that is formed against us shall prosper, for all the fiery darts of the devil are sure to pass over our heads, as the enemy of souls cannot shoot low enough to reach us to our hurt. Take this hint from a very old man—just putting off his harness, while you are but just putting it on."

"Wotton-under-edge, Sept. 9, 1831.

"I conclude you are now settled in your winter quarters, and that a fair trial will now be given, to see how far the great Head of the church may design that you should attend more statedly at a place of very solemn importance, as it respects the future prosperity of the Redeemer's kingdom in our land; as people of the first rank, together with others, make Leamington a place of general resort. And while, I trust, you are made tremblingly to cry, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' yet, for your encouragement, let it not be forgotten that

your 'sufficiency is of God;' and the more you feel of your own weakness, the more you may expect a degree of that strength, which will render you an able minister of the New Testament,—not of the letter, but of the Spirit,—whose praise is not of man, but of God. If you are enabled, from the feelings of a devoted mind, to enter upon the work, you may depend upon that blessing from above, which will be attended with a most glorious result. Read and pray over St. Paul's epistles to Timothy and Titus, that you may be taught how to conduct yourself throughout every department of the sacred work. In such a place as Leamington, you know that your conduct will be closely watched; and by a consistent manifestation of the same, you will 'put to silence the ignorance and clamour of foolish men.' Your ordination should soon be thought of.—What are your views on that important subject?"

"Leamington Spa, Nov. 29, 1831.

"As it is highly necessary your ordination should take place, I quite agree with you that no time will be more suitable for that event than when you are in town. Though there are difficulties in the way of forming what is regularly called a church, as it respects the

characters of some belonging to this place, yet I trust you have already proved that you have received your commision from above, as a sent minister of the word of life; this, in my opinion, according to the apostolic rule of ordination, will be a sufficient warrant that you should receive imposition of hands, and thus be designated more immediately to the sacred work. We know many brethren in London that would gladly assist on that solemn occasion; I shall leave you to select them, mentioning this as my peculiar request. I should suppose, among others, Dr. Collyer would have no objection to be one of the number, as he seems less stiff in the Independent line than some others; while I should suppose that some of the brethren (whose names have been already mentioned between ourselves) belonging to the late Lady Huntingdon's connexion, will lend their friendly aid: and if this were to be done on a Friday morning at Surrey Chapel, without any ostentatious parade, I think it would be more to the credit of the sacred cause. After the solemnity, instead of expensive tavern feastings, it would be much more consistent to adjourn to my house to partake of a plain family repast, and there offer up solemn prayer among yourselves, and thus conclude the day."

Mr. Hill by his will left to "the Village Itinerancy for the Education of Young Men for the Christian Ministry," £11,000, for the general purposes of the Society, and to maintain the worship of God at the Tabernacle at Wotton-under-edge, and at the newly-established interest at Leamington. This Society was established by the Rev. John Eyre, minister of the Episcopal chapel at Homerton, to whom Mr. Hill was much attached, and has already sent forth more than one hundred faithful ministers into the villages and dark places of our country. In addition to the property left in trust to the Evangelical Society, the anonymous donations given by Mr. Hill to different religious institutions, at the time of his death amounted to nearly £3000.

In carrying forward his various benevolent objects, Mr. Hill availed himself of the kind efforts of his lay friends. He considered that "if a man had the grace of God in his heart, and a wise tongue in his head," he had a full commission to bring all the sinners he could to Christ. He rejoiced in the labours of his lay brethren, provided they were prudent and modest in their conduct. Occasionally he

would admit them into his own pulpit, and when unable to carry the elements round the table on a communion Sabbath, he more than once requested a lay brother "to lend him his legs for a short season."

When referring to the usefulness of some lay preachers, he observes, "We bless God for the names of a Captain Scott and a Captain Joss; for Captains may have tongues, and brains, and grace as well as Doctors. And men of inferior ranks have been equal to them in a wise conduct, a holy walk, and extended usefulness in the ministry of the word. Some I could mention, eminent in trade, not less eminent in the ministry of the word; perhaps the more useful, as having an influence over their dependents. And though these were neither chosen by the people, nor set over them against their will, yet accepted ordination from the general consent of the church of God, and proved excellently useful in their day and generation. Others also shall I mention? Stone-masons, butchers, weavers, tailors, shopkeepers, and shoemakers, and a certain tinker, who lived a century and half ago, the Right Rev. Bishop Bunyan, who was quite the apostle of Cam-

bridgeshire and Bedfordshire, and, though a Baptist, admitted all to communion with him, whom he believed to be the children of God."*

It is however right to remark, that Mr. Hill would only sanction the preaching of laymen whose characters were unexceptionably good, and whose talents were likely to be useful. He was not anxious to press them forward to the pulpit, but rejoiced to hear of their efforts in the Sabbath schools, the villages, and the workhouses of our land. He had frequent applications from young men who were anxious to enter the ministerial office, or engage in missionary labours. But he was very careful not to take them from their worldly occupations unless he could discover the clear leadings of the providence of God, and acceptable talents in the applicants.

The following letters, addressed to his friend Mr. Bull, will shew Mr. Hill's proper anxiety upon those points.

"Wotton-under-Edge, Aug. 31, 1792.

"My dear Brother Bull,

"To recommend a candidate for the ministry of the word is a work so solemn, that I tremble

* First Journal, p. 147.

at the undertaking. You have already been asked if you have a vacancy, on Mr. Thornton's donation, in your academy, and it seems you have. Now, there is a young man in South Wales that appears devout and in earnest, and who bears a good character among all that know him. It seems that he has preached in a plain way among his poor neighbours, for some time, and with some acceptance; but then he is a shoemaker—and parsons of every description are esteemed better gentlemen than craftsmen of that description. I have examined him, to know, to the utmost of my power, how far pride may have prompted him to seek this office, more for his own promotion than for the glory of God in the salvation of souls. I confess there are so many upstarts of this character, that are now doing an abundance of harm throughout the land, that they make me suspect the motives of all who seek to climb up into the ministry from different low occupations in life; but still, what the Lord has done he can do, and, from the lowest of the people, send into his church the best of his ministers. You will receive herewith the young man's address. That God would bless your heart with richer views of the glories of the Lord Jesus, and sweeter times in preaching

his salvation to the people, is the sincere prayer of

"Your affectionate Brother,

"ROWLAND HILL."

In another letter written about the same time, Mr. Hill remarks:

"I keep a look out for a student, but cannot say how soon I shall send you word when I have succeeded. Jesus rode into Jerusalem on an ass: that minister is not His, who does not feel, and carry his Lord into the congregation. When I can meet with a colt of this description, that loves his Lord, and loves to bear his Lord among the people, I shall recommend him to you. You will pare his clumsy hoof, and comb his rough mane; but encourage him in his lusty, though uncouth, bray, if he brays stoutly, with a single eye to the glory of God. Ram's-horn preachers love to quote the conquest of Jericho,—the coarse blast was wonderfully successful.

"I have just finished the labours of the day. How poorly done, though done with all our might! I have been holding up Christ's full salvation to a ruined world, from the last

invitation in the Bible, Rev. xxii. 17. What language so free and full as the language of the Bible! Oh, for hearts full of Christ's love, and lives devoted to his glory! But what a mere slug do I find myself in the divine life! Quicken me, O Lord, according to thy word:—to this you will add a double amen—one you will say for yourself, and another for your ever affectionate brother,

"R. HILL."

Mr. Hill had the satisfaction to see many of his members actively engaged in the vineyard of the Lord, some of them in our own country, and others in distant lands. He felt deeply interested in their spiritual prosperity, and received great comfort in hearing of their works of faith, and labours of love, and patience of hope.

Meetings for prayer were held every week at Surrey Chapel, and also at the Tabernacle at Wotton. Mr. Hill was unable frequently to attend them; not from any unwillingness to sanction them by his presence, but from inability arising from his numerous public engagements.

Soon after the opening of Surrey Chapel

several devoted men went through the crowded districts of Southwark, talking to the poor, and holding district meetings for prayer. There were persons in those days who considered these proceedings irregular, and complained to Mr. Hill on the subject. "Let them alone," said the good pastor, "they are my ferrets; they go into the holes and corners where I cannot go, and drive out the poor sinner to hear the gospel." He encouraged all his people to cultivate the talent they possessed, in humble and prayerful dependence on God for his blessing.

The reader will see that Mr. Hill did not possess a faith unaccompanied by works. He preached a free and full salvation through the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ. His constant announcement was, "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast." Did he then make void the law through faith?—no! he established it. He could say in the conclusive language of St. James, "Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works." He was at all times anxious that his people should glorify God in their bodies, as well as their spirits; and many who attended his

ministry can well remember how frequently he would exclaim, "Beloved, we want you to practise the holy morality of the gospel. Oh! let your light so shine before men, that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father who is in heaven."

The influence of the Societies established at Surrey Chapel, was not confined to the local district. Applications were often made to Mr. Hill for the particulars of the plans he adopted, which were freely given. When writing to a clergyman in Yorkshire on this subject, he remarks, "With this you will receive the papers relative to the different charities we have among us, for your own selection and discrimination. In all these efforts we only manifest what the Scripture means by righteousness, by the fruits and effects produced thereby. Oh! when shall we reach all that is contained in that single word of exhortation, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know that your labour shall not be in vain *in the Lord*." Without that, we have no bottom or foundation for our obedience; and on that foundation, the higher we are called to build, the more God will be glorified thereby."

Our minister has been removed from the scene of his earthly labours; but "though dead, he yet speaketh" in the Societies he formed; and his works continue to follow him. May we, who were his hearers, remember that our responsibilities are in proportion to the privileges we have enjoyed. What language can describe the awful condition of those persons who attended the faithful and affectionate ministry of Rowland Hill, and yet perished in their sins!

CHAP. X.

MR. HILL'S OPINIONS ON ECCLESIASTICAL POLITY.

REVIEW OF BIOGRAPHERS' REMARKS ON MR. HILL — ARCHBISHOP USHER—REMARKS ON MR. HILL'S OPINIONS—THE CHIEF MAGISTRATE'S DUTY AS TO RELIGION—PERSECUTION MAKES HYPOCRITES —AND IS DESTRUCTIVE TO ESTABLISHMENTS—THE ESTABLISHMENTS IN ENGLAND AND IRELAND, SCOTLAND AND CANADA—DUTY OF CONSCIENTIOUS NONCONFORMISTS—THE SABBATH-DAY—ACT OF UNIFORMITY—ON THE COMPULSORY SUPPORT OF ESTABLISHMENTS—THE CONNEXION OF THE CHURCH WITH THE STATE—THE EFFECTS OF SUCH CONNEXION POINTED OUT—ALL DISSENTERS SHOULD HAVE FULL LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE IF THEIR PRINCIPLES ARE NOT INIMICAL TO CIVIL GOVERNMENT—THE ANCIENT CONVOCATION OF THE CHURCH WHY ALLOWED TO BE DISSOLVED—THE DANGER OF PLACING THE CIVIL SWORD WITH ANY RELIGIOUS BODY—EPISCOPACY AS RECOMMENDED BY USHER AND LEIGHTON — THE KING'S CONGE D'ELIRE— REMARKS ON THE CHRISTIAN BISHOPS — DISCIPLINE — CHURCH COURTS—ON APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION—THE OFFICIAL HOLINESS OF THE PRIESTS—THE ARTICLES OF THE CHURCH—FORM OF PRAYER— MR. HILL'S OPINIONS ON THE REAL DANGER OF THE CHURCH—THE LITURGICAL SERVICE—LORD BEXLEY'S OPINION ON CHURCH REFORM —THE SECTARIANISM OF THE CHURCH AS HOLDING NO MINISTERIAL CONNEXION WITH THE MINISTERS OF ANY REFORMED CHURCHES— SHE ACKNOWLEDGES POPISH ORDINATION—THE MEETING OF VARIOUS CHRISTIAN SECTS IN HEAVEN.

IT is difficult to gather from the biographers of Mr. Hill, what were his exact views of an established religion, or the scriptural government of

of a Christian church. One of them, who professes to hand down to posterity the sentiments of this venerable man,* certainly knew but little about him. He assures his readers that "the system of things pursued at Surrey Chapel, and with which Mr. Hill was so wonderfully enamoured, professed to be a correction of the corruptions of the church of England; but that if that system were tried by the primitive church at Jerusalem, we should be compelled to write upon it, 'Ichabod.'" He states, "It is a mere scheme of human device, the product of the wisdom of Rowland Hill, but on which the word of God stamps the epithet of folly. How impotent, then, are all his charges of heresy, schism, bigotry, and sectarianism, brought against those persons who would reduce the profession of Christianity to the Scripture standard."

Again, the same writer, who professes to give a correct sketch of the venerable man's character, calls him "Rowland-never-wrong,"†—a man "labouring to uphold a system against which the vials of the wrath of Heaven are pouring

* Jones. p. 329. † Ibid, p. 285.

out."* He assures his reader that—"A disposition to make light of the instituted order of Christ's house, being the besetting sin of the present day, few men have contributed more to it than Rowland Hill;"† and then, to crown the whole, the reader is told, in reference to the humble expressions that fell from the lips of the dying saint, "that in the very nature of things, the upholding of the system to which Mr. Hill was attached, "must darken his evidences of personal interest in the Saviour!!"‡

When the Redeemer was reviled, he reviled not again. The writer of this memoir desires to follow in his Master's footsteps, and not to render "railing for railing." In recording the leading incidents in the life of his departed friend, he has endeavoured faithfully to detail the opinions of Mr. Hill, and the plans he adopted and found useful at Surrey Chapel.

Mr. Hill felt a firm attachment to the episcopal church of our country,—although he lamented the existence of many defects in her discipline and practice. Like the pious Arch-

* Jones, p. 314. † p. 315.
‡ Jones, p. 314; also, ante, p. 5.

bishop Usher, he "hoped a time of reformation would come." He saw the necessity of cutting off many abuses, and confessed that the tolerating those abominable corruptions that the canonists had brought in, was such a stain upon a church, that, in all other respects, was the best reformed in the world, that he apprehended it would bring a curse and ruin upon the whole constitution."*

The writings of Mr. Hill contain his matured sentiments on most points connected with ecclesiastical establishments; and although, under certain limitations, it will be seen that he was friendly to them, yet he always "considered religion too sacred a matter to be settled by the mandates of the state, and that the consciences of individuals should be left altogether unfettered upon that important subject."

The writer will not attempt to justify the opinions of his departed friend, or to reconcile them with the views of any denomination in the Christian church. He does not appear as the champion of a party; and his only anxiety is clearly and fully to present Mr. Hill's sentiments on various important subjects, alike inte-

* See Life of Bishop Bedell, by Burnett.

resting to the conscientious episcopalian, and the equally conscientious nonconformist.

On the duty of a Christian chief magistrate to promote true religion, Mr. Hill makes the following remarks, "Should any supreme magistrate, in some heathen land, become Christian, suppose under the influence of the present missionary exertions, is he not at liberty, nay, is it not his duty, to promote the Gospel to the utmost of his power? This, I conjecture, will readily be granted, provided he does not persecute: and this is readily granted in return, for the church never gained any but hypocrites for her converts by the rod of persecution, and was always the purest when in a persecuted state herself."* He adds, "The chief magis-

* The proper language of a government, in giving a religious establishment to their country, seems to be simply of this kind: This is what approves itself to our judgments and consciences; and what we shall, therefore, provide for having taught to our people: we invite, and shall welcome, the concurrence of all who can agree with us; others we leave to pursue the course which shall approve itself to their consciences,—reminding them only of their responsibility to God for the choice they may make. —*Scott's Continuation of Milner's History of the Church of Christ*, vol. ii. p. 517.

trate may have some forms, or modes, respecting Christianity, which he may think to be preferable to others. Shall not liberty be granted to such a magistrate to take that body of Christians under his more immediate cognizance and support, who voluntarily subject themselves to such rules, *provided he presumes not* to compel others to submit to it, *or to support it?*"*

On the subject of persecution, Mr. Hill inquires, "Allowing establishments a power to persecute, what evils might naturally be expected? Is it not probable such persecuting churches would soon find, sown within them, the seeds of their own destruction? And, if the arbitrary power of the prince is sufficiently strong to enforce obedience to the priestly authority to which he meanly submits, what is such a nation better than a nation of slaves?"

"If it be granted," Mr. Hill observes, "for the sake of argument, that the civil magistrate has a right to patronize and promote what HE may call an Established Church, for himself and all that are *voluntary* conformists to it,—yet

* First Journal, p. 102.

will justice, will common sense allow him to enforce others to conform to his Established Church, while the consciences of many must recoil at such a conformity as being sinful and hypocritical before God? This must appear the more preposterous in our happy country, for under the British crown there are no less than three different establishments, namely, Episcopacy in England and Ireland, Presbyterianism in Scotland, and Popery in Canada.

"Now, if it be criminal not to be of the Establishment, such persons should change their religion as often as they change their situation; and in order to accomplish this, would any one wish to see the three different state religions armed with a sufficient power to enforce conformity?"*

"If the national Church happen to be favourable to the dictates of my conscience, it is my *privilege* to conform; if otherwise, it is my *duty* to dissent."†

"I think, therefore, on the general view of matters, that it may be concluded that national churches have their advantages so far as the

* Religious Freedom, p. 19; see also Village Dialogues, vol. iii. p. 106.

† On Parochial Assessments of Chapels, p. 41.

defence and enlargement of the *outworks* of Christianity may be promoted thereby; for to me it is a matter of doubt how even the Sabbath itself could be observed without the assistance of the civil magistrate; and it may be said, that the very existence of Christianity depends upon the observance of the Sabbath, for wherever that sacred day is neglected and profaned, profligacy and dissipation of manners are found to prevail."*

When speaking of the vain attempt to unite minds by legal enactments, he remarks, "The act of uniformity *disgraces* the first pages of our common prayer-book."† "There is no forcing people to be religious,—it is most absurd to think of making a man religious by means of a cudgel; it must be done by persuasion."‡ He also considered, "that to enforce others to pay for the state religion was a rotten prop, which, if removed, establishments would be founded on a firmer basis."§

It will be seen from the extracts which have

* First Journal, p. 105.

† First Journal, p. 86.

‡ Surrey Hibernian Society Meeting, 1828. See also Village Dialogues, vol. iii. p. 107. 26th ed.

§ First Journal, p. 103.

been given, that although Mr. Hill considered it to be the duty of the chief magistrate to promote true religion, yet he was to effect the object by moral means, and not by compulsory legislative enactments. Hence his remark, "National churches have their advantages, so far as the defence and enlargement of the outworks of Christianity may be promoted thereby."

He had the most decided objection to all political interference with the concerns of the church, and in this respect he differed from one of his biographers.* To this point, therefore, the reader's attention is directed. "The connexion of the Church of England with the state," he observes, "I sincerely regret, as it is impossible that she can be otherwise than corrupted thereby."† On the same point he remarks, "While Christianity was supported by her native purity, her beauties were all her own, and the dignity of her power on the hearts of millions had a glorious effect. But when the church was embraced by the state, and began to partake of the riches of the world, she

* See Sidney's Life, preface, p. 8; also 364, &c.

† First Journal of Tour in the Highlands.

partook of its corruptions also; evils which are always naturally to be expected from such temptations being presented to the depraved human heart. Is blame then to be attached to any state which patronizes and supports the cause of Christianity? Quite the reverse. Prophecy declares, "that kings shall be her nursing fathers, and queens her nursing mothers;" consequently it is the duty of every magistrate to protect and promote the promulgation of this most salutary news of mercy and grace to mankind. By this event, however, a distinction soon became visible enough, between a Christian of man's making and a Christian of God's making. When it became creditable to make a profession, outward Christians, without inward Christianity, made their appearance in abundance, and the Christian character was awfully polluted thereby. No wonder, therefore, that as Christianity rolled on through the muddy channel of worldly applause and courtly approbation, it became deeply contaminated thereby, or that, while it was carried down a channel so defiled, it partook of its defiling effects. This paved the way for the establishment of antichrist, through the pride, and luxury, and voracity of priests, and for the introduction of

every abominable error that pampered the corrupted heart of man."*

"The primitive church had no beauties but her own. She claimed no state assistance; and even while she appeared hostile to the religion of every state, by the purity and simplicity of her designs she prospered in the midst of heathen darkness, and the persecuting fury of her enemies. Her bishops, in those days, were eminently her glory, being influenced by no other motives than a regard for the honour of God and the salvation of the souls of men."†

"Notwithstanding, it is readily admitted that national churches, from a native tendency towards abuse, are never likely to prove the most spiritual in any land. Without, therefore, an unlimited protection of every dissentient who can prove that there is nothing in his religion inimical to the civil government, they will become injurious; for then persecution naturally commences, and nothing can be so contrary to the mind of Christ as the spirit of persecution."

"On these principles alone I declare myself no enemy to the Established Episcopal Church

* Apology for Sunday Schools, p. 20, 21.

† Religious Freedom, p. 51.

of England, or the Presbyterian establishment in Scotland; while I deeply lament over each, that by their connexions with the civil power they have lost so much of their original purity and design. Even the primitive church of Rome would never have become the whore of Babylon, had not the favours of the world and the embraces of Constantine deprived her of that chastity which was her original glory."

"If, therefore, the religion of the state does not afford me what I conceive to be the sufficient means of salvation, it is meet that I should be at full liberty to provide for myself. And in this respect, while the dissentients feel themselves as much protected as others, it may be said, that by the laws of the land they are as much established as others. The one may be thus excited to zeal and watchfulness by the other, and the general good be promoted through the whole."*

In referring to the ancient convocation of the church, Mr. Hill remarks, "It should be matter of serious consideration among the leading clergy of the day, why the state has thought proper to deprive the church of its

* First Journal, pages 110, 111.

original constituted authority, by dissolving the convocation directly it is formed, and taking into its own hands, from time to time, the reformation of its abuses? as though the Lords and Commons were better qualified to manage the church, than a synod of Divines."*

"Whenever the clergy, with us, meet in convocation, they are just allowed time to compliment the king with an address,—and he returns the compliment with a dissolution. The state wisely remembers the mischief that has already been done by priests and priestly courts. When they get the civil sword, they are almost sure to use it without mercy. It is judged wisest, therefore, not to trust them for the future."†

The danger of placing power in the hands of any denomination of the church, is pointed out in the following passage.—"I believe that if any denomination be armed with the civil sword, they will precisely act the same part. No blame attaches itself either to the episcopal, presbyterian, or any other government whatever, by these remarks. All will act just in

* Spiritual Characteristics, p. 112.

† First Journal, p. 114

the same way under the same circumstances. The church is sure to be polluted, when invested with the sword of civil power. Our meek and lowly Saviour thus directed his bold and forward disciple, Peter, "Put up thy sword,—for all they that take the sword, shall perish by the sword." Had, then, all religious people devoted themselves to the study of His character, "whose kingdom is not of this world," the spirit of persecution would have been turned into the spirit of forbearance and love."*

Mr. Hill considered a moderated episcopacy to be the most scriptural system of church government.

He observes, "I believe that no prescript form is established in the New Testament church; and though every denomination is convinced that their's is precisely the order which God has decreed for the government of his house; yet I verily believe, and wiser heads than mine have thought the same, that nothing is precisely determined, but that we are referred to general rules, and that these were brought

* First Journal, p. 88.

† Spiritual Characteristics, p. 106.

forward just as circumstances demanded.*— Notwithstanding, the nearer we act according to the primitive precedent, the more we may expect the blessing of the Great Head of the church upon our labours.†

On the subject of episcopal government, he remarks, "When I speak of episcopacy, I beg at all times to be understood, as pleading for such a reduced episcopacy, as was recommended by those learned and pious episcopalians, the Archbishops Usher and Leighton, which they conceived was the episcopacy of the primitive church. Bishops then claimed no other power than what was delegated to them by the elective voice of the presbyters, and people at large. In the purer days of the church this election naturally fell on the most spiritual and wise of their body. Around him they voluntarily collected, as toward a centre: they gave an affectionate submission to him, as a father,—and their government was thereby both strengthened and simplified.

"A mere shadow of such an episcopacy still remains in the English church; for, upon the

* See Lord Bacon's opinion, referred to in chap. I.

† First Journal, p. 139.

death of a bishop the king gives his conge d'elire, or leave to elect, to the presbyters of the cathedral church, at the same time *recommending* a person for their choice; which recommendation they no more dare refuse than they dare to eat a red-hot salamander. One extreme generally produces another. However I might be disposed to vote for the reduction of the episcopacy of the English church, yet I had much rather be under the right reverend fathers in God with us, than under the jurisdiction of the most reverend mothers in God among the stricter Independents."*

Mr. Hill summed up his sentiments on this subject in these words, "I am, all things considered, for a reduced episcopacy, a reformed liturgy, and the election of the minister by the suffrages of the people."†

Our beloved friend thought it highly important that the bishops should be less secular in their pursuits, and so resemble the *primitive* bishops, "who always lived on their cure," and who were devoted entirely to the cultivation of

* First Journal, p. 108.

† Spiritual Characteristics, p. 107.

their own vineyards. He considered many of the dioceses too large for the efficient superintendence of one bishop,* and he hoped the time would come when the number of dioceses and bishops would be considerably increased—that they would receive a fixed, though liberal income—and that the system of promotion, except to the archiepiscopal chairs, would be altogether discontinued. Then his desires would be realized, and our prelates preach "like Bishop Paul, Bishop Peter, and Bishop Timothy, all round their diocese, and with the same zeal that the bishops, at the time of the Reformation, went from town to town, and to different market-crosses, far and wide. And then they will have quite as much to do as the most laborious among the *working* clergy of the day; and woe betide the Methodist and the Dissenter, when this event takes place!"

When speaking on the subject of discipline, Mr. Hill remarks, "The church is grievously defective in this respect; and as to her church courts—*spiritual courts*, falsely so called—it is enough to say, that they are of Roman birth. I am,

* Village Dialogues, vol. iii. p. 104; 26th edition.

however, no ecclesiastical politician, therefore further this deponent sayeth not."

In reference to apostolical succession, Mr. Hill spoke decidedly. "It is very strange," he would say, "to find so many protestant churches making so much of a popish ordination, for the sake of a chimerical apostolic succession."* He considered it "a foolish boast for the clergy to claim to be the immediate and privileged descendants of our Lord, and his successors."† The *official* holiness of the priesthood, he most solemnly objected to. Hence he remarks, "As to the priests, some will have it, that the efficacy of their functions is in their office, and is not at all affected by their character; so that a priest, though as wicked as sin can make him, yet in himself he has a power, by a sort of spiritual conjuration, to send others to heaven; while he himself, if wickedness can take him thither, is going fast to hell."‡

* First Journal.

† Village Dialogues, vol. i. p. 341.

‡ Village Dialogues, vol. iii. p. 93.

The articles of the church were highly valued by Mr. Hill: "a sounder confession," he observes, "cannot be desired; but too many, I fear, can subscribe the most explicit Calvinism, and preach the grossest Arminianism. In short, many can preach as though they had engaged to go by the rule of reverse."*

No one was more attached to the prayers of the church, than the minister of Surrey Chapel. He thought "that they might be a little altered for the better by some few omissions,—but, on the whole, he considered them to be full of spirituality and meaning."

During the long life of Mr. Hill, he often heard the cry, "The church is in danger." He smiled at the fears of many of his beloved friends. He felt that if the episcopal church were a scriptural one, it was built upon a rock that could not be moved. He, therefore, remarks, "The real danger of the church cannot be from those that are without, but from those that are within. Let the ministers of the established church faithfully preach the doctrines they are sworn again and again to maintain; let them prove, by their conduct, that

* First Journal, p. 111.

they have entered into the sacred office with no other designs, than a pure and holy love to the souls of men; let them manifest, in their daily walk, that, "as He who has called them is holy, so they are desirous themselves to be holy in all manner of conversation;" and, at once the idle, the contemptible, the malicious cry, "the church is in danger," will in a great measure cease throughout the land. Meeting-houses will, in some places, be thinned,—and our churches will be revisited with unaccustomed crowds."*

"Now, let no other motives but such as are pure as the church of Christ itself, be admitted in the nomination of the bishops to their respective sees; and let *them* well attend to the religious and moral characters of those they ordain. Let them take heed that they are such as can most solemnly protest, before God, "that they are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon them that office and administration." Let such as these, abstracted from the world, or at least from the wicked enjoyments of it, which they renounced at

* On Parochial Assessments of Chapels, p. 48.

baptism—and completely dedicated and devoted to the service of God,—live among their parishioners as their kind advisers, fathers, and friends; and diligently preach the word of life, with all possible zeal, to promote their eternal good,—it will then soon appear how weak and unavailing are all the efforts of the low enthusiast, and the paltry sectarian, to disturb their peace."* †

Mr. Hill, notwithstanding these opinions of the defects to be found in the episcopal church, observes, "The liturgy is a public blessing to the nation,—nor is there a church upon earth that so much promotes the abundant reading of the word of God. While, therefore, I love her constitution, I may grieve over a fatal

* "No dissenting congregations can exist," remarks Mr. Hill, "but as their ministers are blameless in their deportment, and diligent in the discharge of the sacred duties imposed upon them by their congregations. They are a voluntary association, having no support from the state,—and if deficient in purity and consistency of conduct, in the general, the support from the people will soon be withdrawn, and they will be left to sink into ruin."

† On Parochial Assessments of Chapels, p. 52.

declension from her original doctrines, and wish for her further reformation;* still, as she is, may she stand! And if she be not betrayed by the bad lives and conduct of her own ministers, she will ever continue impregnable from without."†

The sectarianism which Mr. Hill strongly condemned, wherever he found it, he never justified in the church to which he was attached. He mourned over the fact that its discipline prevented the exercise of practical charity towards many brethren who only differed from the church in matters which were not essential to salvation. Upon this point he observes, "It may not be amiss to remind every high churchman of a passage to be found in the beginning of the Common Prayer-book,

* "If the friends of the church, instead of taking the lead in a mild reform of abuses, contend obstinately for their protection, and treat every man as an enemy who aims at reform, they will certainly be overpowered at last, and the corrective applied by those who will apply it with no sparing hand."—*Second Letter to Rev. Dr. Marsh, on the subject of the Bible Society, by Lord Bexley, then N. Vansittart, Esq.* page 51.

† Apology for Sunday Schools, p. 32.

concerning the service of the church,—as it breathes that spirit of true Christian candour, that should never be forgotten. 'And in these our doings, we condemn no other nations, nor present any thing but to our own people only; for we think it convenient, that every country should use such ceremonies as they shall think best, to the setting forth God's honour and glory, and to the reducing of the people to a most perfect and godly living, without error or superstition.' Had they adopted the practice of such liberal sentiments nearer home, would not the church of England have shone more, as being possessed of the temper and spirit of the church of Christ? And which of her advocates will vindicate that spirit, whereby she stands aloof from all other reformed churches throughout the Christian world, without having the least ministerial fellowship and connection with them? Even the most able and excellent ministers of the established church of Scotland, though precisely under the same civil protection with our own, are perfectly secluded from any connection with our establishment. How often have I heard even candid dissenting ministers lament the fact, that while the ordination of a popish priest is deemed valid, so

that after recantation no further ordination is demanded; yet, if a protestant minister, of any country, wishes to join her community, re-ordination is rigidly required!!"*

"There will be," exclaims this worthy champion for the general fellowship of the saints, "but one church in heaven. There shall I find many a stiff Seceder, narrow-minded Independent, high-flying Episcopalian, and many a rigid Papist, who may have escaped, by the compassion of God, even from the church of Rome itself, notwithstanding her numerous errors, and the blasphemous absurdities of her mass."†

The extracts which have been given from Mr. Hill's published works, clearly shew that he was devotedly attached to the episcopal church, though he deeply deplored her defects. "No one circumstance," he states, "would give me so much satisfaction as to see the church of England, what she should be, the living temple of the living God: the palladium of British piety, and the glory of the land."

The system of church government adopted at Surrey Chapel, and its practical operation, will be explained in the next chapter.

* Village Dialogues, vol. iii. p. 108; 26th edit.

† First Journal of Tour in Scotland, p. 109.

CHAP. XI.

THE DECLARATION REFERRED TO IN THE CHAPEL TRUST-DEED, AND SIGNED BY MR. HILL.—HIS VIEWS OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT, WITH PARTICULARS OF THE PLANS ADOPTED AT SURREY CHAPEL.

THE DECLARATION SIGNED BY MR. HILL, OF HIS DOCTRINAL OPINIONS—LETTER TO MR. BULL—DESCRIPTION OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST—PARTICULARS OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT AT SURREY CHAPEL—ITS PRACTICAL OPERATION—"THE GOOD HEART"—"THE BLESSED ALMSHOUSES"—INDISCRIMINATE COMMUNION CONSIDERED—THE CONGREGATIONAL SYSTEM—MR. HILL'S OPINION AS TO THE INDEPENDENCY OF CHURCHES—ON THE ORDINATION OF MINISTERS—DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE PLANS ADOPTED AT SURREY CHAPEL AND THE CONGREGATIONALISTS—ON THE FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIANS—THE LITURGICAL SERVICE—EXTRACTS FROM DR. WORDSWORTH'S ECCLESIASTICAL BIOGRAPHY—CLERGY SHOULD HAVE A LITTLE "ELBOW ROOM"—OBJECTIONS TO THE BAPTISMAL AND BURIAL SERVICES—AN ECCENTRIC MINISTER—"MR. LOVEGOOD'S" PLANS—THE STRICT-COMMUNION BAPTISTS AND MR. HILL—ORIGINAL LETTER—DR. PHILIP AND AFRICA—EXTRACTS FROM DR. PYE SMITH'S SERMON—EXTRACTS FROM DR. STEWART'S SERMON ON "PRESBYTERIAN ELDERSHIP"—WHAT WAS ROWLAND HILL?

In all systems of church government, it is of paramount importance, on the settlement of a minister, that his doctrinal sentiments should be clearly and fully ascertained. This was the solemn conviction of Mr. Hill at the commencement of his pastoral labours, and he therefore

considered it necessary to define his views of the great truths of revelation.

On the 4th of January, 1785, about eighteen months after the opening of the chapel, a Trust Deed was regularly executed by Mr. Hill and his Trustees. This deed refers to the following "formulary or declaration," prepared by the pastor, as containing a full statement of the truths to be preached by him, and his successors in the ministry at Surrey Chapel:—

"HAVING been appointed by the providence of God to the work of the ministry in the Surrey Chapel, upon my own request I entered into the following solemn engagements respecting my ministry in that place; namely, That I hold that office no longer than while I preach agreeable to the doctrinal Articles of the Church of England, and do not give the use of the pulpit to any one who is known to preach otherwise. As men of corrupt minds are prone to misconstrue words of the plainest signification, and as these have, by many, been perverted from their original meaning,—agreeable to the request of my brethren in trust, I give my sentiments respecting these Articles of religion, in what sense I am persuaded they were understood by our first Reformers, and consequently of my own engagements in not preaching contrary to them myself, and in not permitting others to do the like. That my sentiments may be delivered in a clear and concise method, I shall not regularly consider each article in order, but sum up the leading Doctrines contained in them, in a short system, or

CONFESSION OF FAITH.

"I believe, according to the 1st and 5th Articles, that the Godhead is One. That he is endued with all possible perfections, and that yet, in a manner perfectly mysterious, there are Three, — God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit, equally and eternally existing together; that each ought to be worshipped as God; that though their Deity is personal,

their existence is one. I believe, according to the 2nd and 4th Articles, that the union subsisting in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ between his human and Divine nature, is to be considered as one of the essential pillars of the Gospel; that whatever Christ did on earth in a way of obedience and suffering, was in order that it might be imputed to his people for righteousness—so that it is not our faith, but the work of Christ wrought out by him for us, that is our imputed righteousness for justification. I also believe that Christ now acts as our Intercessor and Advocate in heaven, with his glorified person, united to the same Divine nature he had eternally with his Father. As directed by the 6th Article, I adopt the Old and New Testament, exclusive of the Apocrypha, as the only unerring rule for faith and practice. And though it is absurd and unscriptural to persecute people for not subscribing or believing human formularies, yet each church has an undoubted right, in regard to doctrine or discipline, to declare their own sentiments as the terms of admission to their respective members.

"Agreeable to the 9th Article, I believe that man, since the fall, is perfectly cut off from God, and that though in natural men some principles of good towards each other may be found, yet as this neither extendeth to God, nor proceedeth from the sanctifying agency of his Holy Spirit, it cannot be considered to be of the nature of true holiness, and therefore is frequently found to appear amongst those that in the spirit of their minds live without God in the world. I believe, therefore, that man has not only lost all the nature of true holiness, but that he is filled with enmity itself against God; that, according to the original Latin phrase, "*quam longissime*," he is fallen as far as possible—to the very uttermost. I, therefore, conclude that the natural man is equally cut off from God with the fallen spirits, and that consequently his nature is earthly, sensual, and devilish; and that Jeremiah meant to describe the moral state of all mankind, when he says, 'the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?' indicating thereby that its wickedness is so deceitful and desperate, that none but God can know it.

"I consequently next believe, respecting our fallen state, agreeable to the 10th Article, that we have no good or free will of our own, to turn to God, but that, as we are naturally enmity against God, there is nothing left us of a moral nature that can help us to join in with God. I, therefore, utterly deny that there is any power in man to make himself, or to help to make himself, through Christ, acceptable to God; and would as soon affirm that it is in the power of a fallen

spirit to join in with the infinitely pure and holy nature of God, as it is with the carnal mind of man, which has before been declared to be enmity against God. I, therefore conclude that the conversion of a sinner to God does not arise from some supposed seeds of grace working in every man, the accepting or rejecting of which is left to the determination of his own will, which cannot determine upon any thing that is good; but, on the contrary, I am firmly persuaded that our salvation arises from the absolute power of Almighty God, who works in and illuminates the understanding of those only who are chosen in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world, that they may have that good will, and afterwards continues unchangeably to work in them to will and to do by his own good pleasure, that he may secure their perseverance unto eternal glory.

"I next declare my firm persuasion, agreeable to the 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, and 18th Articles, that there is no one cause or condition whatsoever whereby man is pardoned or accepted by a holy God, but only on account of the obedience and atonement of the Lord Jesus, imputed to them that are chosen in him unto salvation; that as every man is perfectly ruined by the transgression of the first Adam, so every elect soul is as perfectly saved through the obedience of the Second Adam, by being made complete in him; that every idea of a sinner's being accepted by Christ on account of some conditions that he performs, I utterly disown. I therefore conclude, with the Reformers, that all supposed good works done before justification are not of the least avail, and that the doctrine itself is absurd, as no man can do good works till he is first justified by faith. Lastly, I conclude that whatever mercy God may secretly reveal to such as have never heard the glad tidings of salvation, yet this can only be given them for the sake of Christ, in whom they are chosen, and by whom alone they are saved, and not on account of their framing their lives according to the law or the light of nature, or according to that too common expression of their 'doing as well as they can.' I believe, in regard to the 17th Article, that the godly consideration of predestination and our election in Christ is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the workings of the Spirit of Christ. And though this doctrine cannot be better explained than in the Article itself, yet as some have strangely mistaken it by holding up the unscriptural notion of our being elected on account of our faith or good works foreseen, I further thus declare my sentiments respecting

the same. I believe that no soul ever did, or ever can, influence God in giving him the grace of election; that we are not chosen on account of any foreseen good in us, but entirely by the sovereign will of God; that as all mankind are equally fallen, election unto salvation must be absolute and unconditional. I believe, therefore, if all mankind were absolutely elected, all mankind would absolutely be saved, since God cannot change in his love. I conclude, therefore, that none of the elect can fall away, and that they only shall be saved; and that where it is said, Article 16th, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin, it is not to be understood that a child of God may finally fall, and perish everlastingly, but that, though he may backslide, he shall and must be recovered; so that I believe the perseverance of the saints is absolutely decreed, and that it does not in anywise depend upon their faithfulness to God, but entirely upon God's covenanted faithfulness to them, that keeps them faithful to him; that God has fixed his love on a certain number, to which none shall be added or taken away: and I further believe, respecting their sanctification, that all who live to maintain a visible profession shall be sanctified by the power of God the Holy Spirit, who is the invincible Sanctifier of the elect; so that our sanctification is secured by our election, and that we prove our election no otherwise than by our sanctification, by shewing that we are called by a holy calling, and predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's dear Son. I therefore express my utter abhorrence of all antinomian doctrines; and as I am fully persuaded every true believer must be holy, I leave upon record my strongest testimony against all those awful perverters of the Gospel, who, under the pretence of affirming our sanctification is in Christ, or any other subterfuge whatever, exclude the necessity of an inward work of the Spirit of Christ, sanctifying and regenerating the souls of the elect.

"I next agree with the 19th Article, that the visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered according to Christ's ordinance: and I further add my sentiments concerning what is recorded in the latter part of the 23d Article, respecting the calling and ordination of ministers; that, agreeable to the sentiments and behaviour of the first Reformers, there are other ministers and churches of Christ besides those that are Episcopal; that all Protestant ministers of the Gospel, after a proper trial of their gifts, should submit to some decent solemn appointment to the

pastoral charge; and that as all such ministers have an equal right to the same office, they should give each other, as far as circumstances may allow, the right hand of fellowship in the name and fear of God. I omit, for the sake of brevity, enlarging upon those Articles in which the absurdities of Popery are renounced, but only observe, that I perfectly agree with them in all they say against the fooleries and blasphemies of the man of sin. I believe the pope is Antichrist, and that his religion is abominable. Lastly, should any one attempt in future times to miscontrue what I have now declared, I beg to be understood only after the meaning of that Catechism prefixed to the New Testament of the Bibles printed in the different years of 1588, 1602, 1614, and which bears the title of 'Certain Questions and Answers' touching the doctrine of predestination, the use of God's word, and sacraments, which is also transcribed at large in the book in which the concerns of the Chapel are recorded; and further, according to what was specified to be the doctrine of the Church of England by those bishops and ministers who went over to declare against the remonstrants at the Synod held at Dort in the year of our Lord 1618."

"Such are the sentiments I consider myself solemnly engaged to maintain, as being not only consistent with the meaning of the first Reformers in the above-mentioned Articles, but what I also conceive to be perfectly agreeable to the word of God: upon these truths alone I dare ground the hopes of my eternal salvation, humbly beseeching God, that after my decease a succession of faithful and zealous ministers may be raised up, to preach the same glorious truths among the people till time shall be no more. Amen. Amen.

"ROWLAND HILL."

The contents of this interesting document agree with the brief statement of Mr. Hill's doctrinal opinions referred to in a former chapter, and which he steadily maintained throughout his long ministry. He occasionally touched upon all the doctrines, yet he loved to dwell on

the riches of free distinguishing grace, the absolute necessity of regeneration, and the duty and privilege of a holy walk before God.

In addition to this Declaration, a letter may here be introduced, from which his doctrinal views may also be gathered.

"Wotton-under-edge, June 10, 1801.

"My dear Brother,

"What a miserable Gospel is that which directs me to qualify myself for the mere mercies of my God! This *is* Gospel, if blind men may be told they may see if they would give themselves eyes, or that lame men may walk if they will give themselves legs. Farewell *conditional* salvation,—or I am in despair. In the doctrine of unconditional election I find sanctification irresistibly secured to a sinner as vile as the vilest that ever lived since Adam fell. Oh blessed be Jehovah for the Father's law, the Son's gospel, and the Spirit's grace! Some Arminians have been making a bustle about us in these parts, and it is their inconsistent stuff that has drawn these thoughts from my mind. The Arminian, from his notions of a milder remedial law, instead of the holy law of God, insults God in his purity;—as he proceeds, he

next insults the Son, in his atonement;—and, from first to last, insults the Spirit, in his free grace, and gratuitous almighty operations. Oh, blessed be God for a free-grace Gospel,—this I continue preaching about the country from place to place, and God help me to keep at it to the last.—My love to young Smith and Elliott. We shall expect to see the latter at Rodborough at the time appointed. Love to Mrs. Bull, and your lovely Tommy.

"Yours affectionately,

"R. HILL."

"To Rev. W. Bull."

The doctrinal sentiments of Mr. Hill having been fully detailed, his views of church government will now be given, with the particulars of the plans he adopted at Surrey Chapel.

The church of Jesus Christ, Mr. Hill considered to be "penitent believers, when convened together, of every party."* "The primitive Christians," he remarks, "lived in connected harmony and friendship with each

* Village Dialogues, Vol. iii. p. 95. See also definition in previous declaration.

other; elders, or overseers, or bishops, terms of the same scriptural import, were ordained or appointed in different cities, to govern the juniors; the elders presided over one and the same congregation, and some of them had the public management or superintendence of the people, while others of them were its public teachers."*

In his Warning to Professors, Mr. Hill thus describes the system of church government adopted at Surrey Chapel,—"I am happy to be so situated, as that I am at full liberty to attend to such discipline as is necessary, for the credit of every Christian church: and under a little proper regulation, I find that a thousand *good* communicants can be as easily regulated as ten, without encumbering ourselves with a set of restrictive church rules and church books,† the Bible being quite enough for us. All applicants

* Village Dialogues, Vol. iii. p. 96, 97.

† "My objection," remarks Mr. Hill, in his Warning to Professors, p. 69, "is against those church books which contain abominable anti-christian laws and rules, whereby Christians are separated from each other, by not allowing even occasional communion; not against such church books which are made use of for the sake of regularity and discipline."

know that they are inadmissible, unless they can first produce evidence from different witnesses, as required, that their characters are fair and good; the clearest knowledge of the *theory* of the Gospel goes for nothing if this be wanting, though that also is made a matter of serious inquiry.

The city of London may be compared to a great wilderness; we seldom know how our next neighbour lives: I have therefore found great utility in announcing, on three different occasions, before all the communicants, the names and abodes of those who wish more statedly to join the communion. They are next regularly registered, that we may call upon them whenever necessity requires: after this, they receive frequent charges, that they may know all conformity to the world is totally prohibited among us. By this plan, considering the very imperfect state of things, though we do not suppose that all is gold that glitters, yet, comparatively speaking, the disgraceful characters have been very few. Thus things have, with a little attention, been comfortably managed, while the most pleasant peace and harmony universally prevail. I should not have mentioned the above,

if I had not been under the necessity of contradicting a very prevalent report, that we have no discipline at Surrey Chapel. I might further add, no persons are admitted till after they have been probationary communicants for three months. Such as are admitted among us, if permitted by others, are at liberty to go elsewhere also; only, if they come with us, we expect to know their lives."*

As to the internal government of a church, Mr. Hill observes, "I like the idea of ministers and elders, the elders being all men of prayer and great spirituality. The elders, like aldermen, or eldermen, of a city, should be representatives of the younger members of the church, whose general approbation should at all times be attended to. Government should be a delegated business, and a few, well chosen, always accomplish the best work. Now, it should rest with these to attend to the management of the congregation, while the people at large should be heard on every just occasion,—proposing no other terms of communion among their members than what the word of God

* Warning to Professors, p. 63.

demands, 'repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ;' and that they should be persons of a godly life and sound faith."*

A detail will now be given of the practical operation of the plan which has been described. When any person wished to be united in Christian fellowship with the church at Surrey Chapel, he was introduced to the pastor by one of its members, who was acquainted with his moral and religious character. This introduction was generally private, which Mr. Hill preferred, because he thought that few could really command their feelings before the assembled church, and that much more satisfactory information could be elicited by free conversation. These interviews were often of an interesting description. It was peculiarly delightful to hear the aged minister ascertaining by a lengthened examination the spiritual condition of a youthful applicant. When he found that his ministry had been the means of producing the anxious inquiry, "What must I do to be saved?" the mutual tear would be seen, and it might easily be discovered how sincerely the faithful servant rejoiced in his reward.

* First Journal, p. 168.

On one of these occasions, a respectable female called on Mr. Hill, and expressed her wish to be united with the church. He had several friends with him at the time,—but soon received the applicant. He, however, was not, at that time, in the happiest state of mind. Among other questions, he put the following one to the applicant.—"Have you a good heart?". When she replied, "I hope I have, Sir." Mr. Hill called the attention of a friend to the reply, and said, "Come, and see a wonderful woman, who has got a *good* heart. I'm sure it's more than I can say." The worthy female was much affected, but most judiciously answered, "I trust, Sir, I have a *new* heart; and I did not think it wrong to call the work of the Holy Ghost, a *good* work." This remark touched the worthy man. The tear started from his eye, and he immediately apologized in the most Christian manner for having wounded her feelings. This fact is honourable to both the parties.

The pastor having received from the applicant satisfactory references as to moral and religious character, he was invited to attend the next meeting of the church. These meetings were held on every Monday evening

through the year, at seven o'clock, and were confined to church members. They were commenced by singing, after which a member engaged in prayer, — then the names of the persons proposed for membership at former meetings, were read over, and the inquiry made, "Is there any objection on the part of any of our friends to the persons now proposed for Christian fellowship?" If no objections were made, the persons were considered as admitted members.

After the names of former candidates were called over, Mr. Hill mentioned to the church the new applications which had been made to him, and detailed the substance of his conversations. He dwelt particularly on the means by which the applicants had been led to the Divine Redeemer. These statements were interspersed with many useful observations, particularly on the various means by which it pleased God to call his people to the knowledge of himself. The venerable minister then proposed the admission of the candidate, and he was received accordingly, with the *concurrence* of the church, but not by the votes of the members present. In case any friend raised an objection to the apulicant's reception, it was

generally considered by the minister in private, who made a future report to the church on the subject.

At the first church-meeting the applicant received a ticket as an occasional communicant, —his name was called over at several subsequent meetings, after which he was received as a regular member.

On some occasions the members were publicly admitted, without any previous interview with the minister. The examinations on such occasions often displayed the peculiar discernment of the pastor. He knew how far to probe the tender conscience. He was the kind but faithful physician; "the son of consolation," to the timid but genuine seeker for salvation. He sometimes detected the hollow pretensions of the hypocrite, and then he could speak with the power of "the son of thunder;" and a person whose empty profession had once been detected by Mr. Hill, seldom wished to have a second encounter with him.

It sometimes happened that very singular scenes were witnessed by the members of the church. One fact of this kind will shew the wisdom of our departed friend. At the time when he had completed his plan for building

almshouses for the reception of aged female Christians, there was an alleged revival of religion among the women advanced in life, some of whom were anxious to join the church. On one occasion, a poor female made her appearance at the church meeting; when Mr. Hill made his usual inquiry, "Is there any friend present who wishes to be proposed as a member?". The aged dame rose, and made an unusually low courtesy. The following dialogue then took place.

Min. So you wish to join the church?

Ap. If you please, Sir.

Min. Where have you been accustomed to hear the gospel?

Ap. At your *blessed* chapel, Sir.

Min. Oh! indeed, at my *blessed* chapel, dear me! and how long have you attended with us?

Ap. For several years.

Min. Do you think you have got any good by attending at chapel?

Ap. Oh! yes, Sir, I have had many *blessed* seasons.

Min. Indeed! under whose ministry do you think you were led to feel yourself to be a sinner?

Ap. Under your *blessed* ministry.

Min. Indeed! and do you think your heart is pretty good?

Ap. Oh! no Sir, it is a very bad one!

Min. What! and do you come here with your bad heart, and wish to join the church?

Ap. Oh! Sir, I mean that my heart is not worse than others,—it is pretty good on the whole.

Min. Indeed,—that's more than I can say; I'm sure mine's bad enough. Well, have you heard that we are going to build some *blessed* alms-houses?

Ap. Yes, Sir, I have.

Min. Should you like to have one of them?

Ap. Dropping a very low courtesy, "Yes, Sir, if you please!"

Min. I thought so. You may go about your business, my friend, you wo'n't do for us."

The applicant then slowly retired, when the good man made a profitable improvement of the circumstance, and pointed out the great deceitfulness of the human heart.

When all the business connected with the church meeting was disposed of, the pastor delivered an affectionate address to his people, which generally lasted about half an hour. He seldom took a text, but indulged in free

conversation, and was accustomed to press home on his people the practical duties of religion. During one winter he read extracts from letters he had received from Whitefield, Berridge, and other departed friends, who once laboured with him in the vineyard of the Lord. This correspondence carried him back to his early days, and his mind was frequently kindled up to a state of peculiar ardour. These were seasons long to be remembered by his church. As he approached the end of his ministry, after more than eighty winters had passed over him, it was an interesting scene to behold the aged minister, like the apostle John, appearing in the midst of an affectionate and united people, and, like that apostle, exhorting them, "My little children, love one another."

If any fact came to the knowledge of the pastor which cast a shade over the character of a member, he always privately inquired into the affair. If he was convinced that the charge was altogether false, he took no public notice of the matter, but allowed the person to continue in communion. If, however, he considered that the charge was well founded, he requested the person to deliver back his communion ticket,

and would briefly refer to the event at the next meeting of the church. He considered that by this plan much painful matter was kept from the members, the knowledge of which could not be productive of any practical good.

The plans adopted at Surrey Chapel will shew that Mr. Hill did not sanction an indiscriminate approach to the table of the Lord. In reference to "those congregations who suffer the avenues of the Lord's table to be left *wide open* to every intruder who may venture to approach," he remarks, "The *good* being thus kept away by the intrusion of the *bad*, and for want of a proper 'communion of saints,' the saints naturally resort to those places which are more congenial to the feelings of their holy minds. I believe matters of fact prove this point, for I am told that at those places where the communion is thus *promiscuously* administered, it is generally but ill attended."*

* Warning to Professors, p. 66. One of the biographers of my departed friend inquires, "Where in the midst of all the invectives of the apostle against the church of Corinth, is there a single word to be found about withdrawing from it?" † If the Christian is not to withdraw from a church containing improper characters,

† Sidney, page 398.

It may be asked, in what respects the opinions of Mr. Hill differed from his Congregational brethren. The following extracts will give the needful information upon this subject. "In regard to the *internal* government of every church," Mr. Hill remarks, "it must be congregational; and I know of no churches but what are so, where there is any real government at all, whether Methodist, Moravian, Quaker, or Presbyterian."*

In describing the Congregational system, Mr. Hill observes, that "A strict Independent congregation is a complete spiritual republic. All other republics are incomplete. In those they act by their representatives; but in this, youngsters and old ladies all act for themselves. They neither have, nor can they have, rulers,

how is he to attend to the exhortation, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you?" 2 Cor. vi. 16. But should we still remain in communion with such a church, is it not the duty of all its members, according to the direction of the apostle respecting the incestuous person, "to put away from among them wicked persons?"

* First Journal, p. 131.

overseers, or elders, for each has a positive right to rule, to oversee, and to control the conduct of his own minister. As to elders, the novice ranks with them the moment he is admitted. The minister is the speaker, and only the speaker, in their *spiritual house of commons*."*

Mr. Hill did not agree with his Congregational brethren as to the independency of different churches, and their system of ordination. "Where is the separation and independency of the churches to be found in Scripture? I am sure not in the Acts of the Apostles, where we have frequent meetings of the whole body in connexion. They assembled connectedly; they consulted connectedly; and they acted according to the judgment of the connected body. See Acts xi. xv. &c. &c. But when it is added, it was not a few, but the whole church that was consulted, it would be very difficult to shew how many were consulted among the multitude, considering the many thousands of them that then believed, and met at the same time. But this would be nothing to the purpose; for while sometimes we hear of the apostles and elders, at other times

* First Journal, p. 134.

the brethren are mentioned as part of the congregated body; upon the very face of the business, this will never lead to the idea of separate and independent communities. And the word "church" itself, in my opinion, stands more in the way of common sense than most words besides; for what does it, after all, mean? — a mere gathering together. The very same word is applied to meetings of heathens and Jews, and a mere mob, as well as an assemblage of Christians. And whether in larger or smaller bodies, they still congregated; and a congregation, whether small or great, in Scripture, is ever translated in one sense, a church. Nothing, therefore, could thereby be determined. It is enough to prove that they met, consulted, and acted together in those days; therefore they evidently appeared not to be independent but united;* and consequently it is not to be wondered at that the ordinations of those days

* "Dr. Owen, while he pleads for the independence of churches, as it is called, yet strongly urges the necessity of the existence of a little presbytery, for the internal management of those churches. I believe a variety of Christian congregations would be much more happy among themselves, if, instead of being governed 'by old men and maidens, young men and

presented another aspect than those now practised among the Independents; for we find the apostle Paul directs Titus, without the least ceremony, and without referring to the choice of the people, to ordain elders, overseers, or bishops, (terms evidently synonymous) in every city, which would have been contrary to all common sense, if the people had a scriptural and exclusive right to ordain them among themselves by their mere elective voices; unless it can be proved that two appointments to the same office by different persons are better than one."*

children, provided they call on the name of the Lord,' and are admitted into their communion, they had constructed among themselves such a sort of spiritual committee for the mangement of their church concerns."—Village Dialogues, vol. iii. p. 105. 26th ed.

* First Journal, page 135, where there is a lengthened argument on the subject, and Mr. Hill gives his opinion on the term deacon, "which," he contends, "according to the plain sense of the Bible, means servant or minister." p. 147. On the term bishop he says, "Our translators of the Bible being mostly high-churchmen, supposing that Episcopacy must be founded upon the apostolic office, are pleased to confer on the apostolic *deaconship* of Judas the title of a bishopric. Acts i. 20. An unfortunate hit—for we hear of no other bishopric

"In what part of the word of God is this new method of ordination by the mere election of the people so rigidly enjoined? Of two elections only we are informed in the New Testament, the one that of Matthias, the other the election of the seven stewards commonly called deacons; it will puzzle the wisest heads among them to find a third."

"Now I do verily believe," Mr. Hill observes, "that the whole work of making ministers rests with God alone. And while one party affirms it is by the people's election, and another by the power of ordination of presbyters or bishops, the Lord will give his people to know that the Holy Ghost is the only maker of every spiritual church officer, and that ordination was nothing but an apostolic institution, giving the right hand of fellowship to those who were previously ordained, or sent of God; and instead of supposing that the people's choice made the minister, the people should have nothing to do in choosing the minister as their private

besides this solitary one." Ibid. p. 146. See also his remarks on "the elders," Ibid. p. 152, &c., whom he considers to be "overseers, rulers, or leaders." See also the 38th of the Village Dialogues, vol. iii.

pastor, till he be first ordained or appointed of God; while it is readily admitted that the pastoral charge over separate bodies must be kept up, and should in common sense be referred to the choice of the people."*

The extracts which have been given shew that Mr. Hill was afraid of what he called the republicanism of the Congregational system. He more especially objected to that form of church government, because he did not consider that sufficient spiritual power rested with the pastor. He thought that ministers "who gave themselves to the study of the word and to prayer," should be invested with more authority than the poor unlettered member of his church. In the admission and dismission of members, Mr. Hill exercised greater power than the Independent minister, but still all he did was with the privity of the members of his church.

He would sometimes humorously remark, "that he did not love to be governed in the church by old women and servant girls," and therefore he objected to the plan of deciding cases which often affected private character by a majority of votes. He feared that such

* First Journal, p. 141, 142.

majorities were sometimes unfairly obtained, even against the minister himself, when an influential man in a church happened to be his opponent. The poor and dependent members might be unfairly influenced, and a bold leader might draw the unreflecting part of the people after him. Such scenes had been witnessed; and when matters affecting the minister's income or some nice point of theology, were the subjects of discussion, he did not consider the poor and illiterate the best judges to be appealed to.

On a close examination of the Congregational system, there will not be found, perhaps, a very material difference between it and the plans adopted at Surrey Chapel. A wise and prudent Independent minister meets his deacons for conference on the business to be brought before their members, and prevents, as far as possible, the discussion of all matters which may lead to disunion. It is generally admitted that the peace of a Congregational church depends much on the conduct of the leader. The difference, then, between the Congregationalist divine and the pastor of Surrey Chapel was this:—the one by previous prudent movements endeavours to prevent any cause of painful collision, and so

secures a majority of his members' votes,—the other brings his matured plans before the church, and seeks its concurrence, but does not expose himself to the painful results of factious opposition. He appeals to them as counsellors, but not as judges.

Although Mr. Hill objected to indiscriminate communion, he rejoiced in the general fellowship of the saints. His soul always appeared peculiarly animated when he beheld around him his beloved brethren of different Christian denominations. At the sacramental feast at Surrey Chapel there were frequently present the members of many different churches. The people of the Lord from all parts of the country, when they came to London, felt it a privilege to join in the communion with good Rowland Hill. The pious Episcopalian, the conscientious Presbyterian, the liberal Baptist, the simple-hearted Moravian, the cautious Independent, and the zealous Wesleyan, would unite around the same festal board. It was then that the church was "one fold under one Shepherd." It was then that the beauty of the Saviour's prayer was perceived, "That they all may be one,—as thou, Father, art in me, and I

in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."*

On these occasions it was pleasing to see the kind manner in which the good pastor would meet, what he considered to be, the innocent prejudices of his Christian brethren. He was willing to give the elements to one while sitting in his pew, if he could not kneel at the table, or he would allow another to stand, if he thought it to be a remnant of superstition to kneel; and it is said that he once humorously offered to administer the sacrament to a non-conforming brother in any mode he pleased, provided he did not wish to receive it while standing on his head! He was attached to the formularies of the church himself,—but he did not think it necessary to press them on others who had the least doubt of their excellence.

Although the liturgical service was greatly

* "I have not the least doubt," remarks Mr. Hill, "that the primitive Christians were all one in Christ, and there was no idea of a Christian not being a communicant in every church—if but a Christian: and that, consequently, no congregation of Christians have a right to exclude a believer from their communion, provided his faith and practice be consistent with the gospel."—*First Journal*, p. 81.

valued by Mr. Hill,—he considered it desirable slightly to abridge it for the use of his people at Surrey Chapel. The communion service was only read on the Sabbath when the Lord's supper was administered. He has remarked, "The liturgy, with a little further reform, I consider to be excellent." It is to be regretted that some few improvements have not been made, considering the *circumstances* connected with its compilation.*

The communion service was frequently referred to by Mr. Hill, in his public ministrations, and it was often affecting to hear with what feelings of deep self-abasement he would repeat the following prayer. "We do not presume to come to this thy table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy

* Dr. Wordsworth, in his "Ecclesiastical Biography," remarks, in reference to the Liturgy published in the reign of Edward the Sixth, "All the care imaginable was taken to unite the whole nation in one religion; and whatever was in the former Liturgy, that might exasperate or offend the Roman Catholics, was taken out, by which compliances, and the expunging of the passages before remembered, the book was made so passable among the Papists, that for ten years they generally repaired to the parish churches, without doubt or scruple."

manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy table. But thou art the same Lord, whose property is always to have mercy. Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed through his most precious blood, that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen."

Very often did he remark, "that the clergy should have a little more elbow-room allowed, and not be compelled to read, on all occasions, every sentence contained in the prayer-book. He referred, when making these remarks, to the passages in the baptismal and funeral services, which have often given much anxiety to some pious and laborious clergymen. If these passages could be more generalized, they might save the feelings of the living, while the state of the dead could not be affected. I remember once mentioning to Mr. Hill that a holy, but somewhat eccentric clergyman, whom we both knew, when reading the sacramental service, was so excited on the subject of the sufferings and death of Christ, that he paused, and exclaimed, "Oh! how these forms keep down the soul!"

"There now," said Mr. Hill, "why should not that dear man have liberty to speak out what he felt?" The forms are good, but they should not be allowed, at all times, to fetter the minister's mind." Mr. Hill records his own practice in the following sketch of Mr. Lovegood:—

"When Mr. Lovegood came to read in the communion service those consolatory passages of Scripture, so appropriate to the feelings of a contrite mind, "Come unto me," &c. and when he read, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all men to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," he repeated it thrice; and for a short space he stood silent before them all; and while he was thus musing "the fire kindled, and at last he spake with his tongue:" My dearest flock, can you doubt for a moment your portion in such forgiving love as this, under the transporting view of the astonishing grace and compassion of Him, who "saveth to the *uttermost* them that come to God through him." Dear man! will his ecclesiastical rulers be angry with him because he could not precisely abide by the prescribed form that was before him? He kept silent, even from good words, while it was pain and grief unto him,—till his heart was hot

within him, and at last he spake with his tongue; he was weary with forbearing, and he could not stay."*

On communion Sabbaths Mr. Hill frequently raised the affections of his people towards the cross, by his short but striking observations on the texts contained in the sacramental service; and in the *last* sermon he preached, he remarked, "Oh! that is a pretty prayer that we make use of at our communion, 'And here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord,' (God grant that this may be our daily prayer, and not on communion days only,) 'ourselves, our souls and bodies;' don't leave any thing behind, 'to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto thee.'"

Although Mr. Hill adopted the forms of the established church, when he administered the sacrament at Surrey Chapel, yet if he spent his communion Sabbath with the Independent or Presbyterian, he would unite with them in their mode of administration. At Wotton-under-edge he pursued the plan adopted by the Congregationalists. His soul loved Christian fellowship with all God's people, and he was,

* Village Dialogues, vol. i. p. 84.

therefore, strongly opposed to the exclusive system of the strict-communion Baptists. On this point he certainly carried his feelings of opposition too far, and would sometimes refuse all contributions to their chapel cases.

It was a happy circumstance that he could unite with *all* Christians at the table of the Lord,—but still it would have been well had he believed that conscientious motives *alone* induced his strict-communion Baptist brethren to keep him from their fellowship. On one occasion he had preached for a Baptist minister on the ordinance Sabbath, and after the sermon took his seat in a pew. "I am sorry, Sir," said a respected deacon, "you cannot sit down at our table." "At your table!" replied Mr. Hill, "I thought it was the Lord's—and I know I should be welcome there!" He then retired from the place. How painful must such a circumstance have been to the pious officer of the exclusive church.

With many ministers of the Baptist denomination, who upheld open communion, he was on terms of affectionate intercourse. On this subject one of his biographers remarks, "He is delighted with such writers as Dr. Mason, of New York, and the late Mr. Robert Hall, of

Leicester; because, like himself, they wrote at random on the subject of communion, teaching men to make light of the commandments of God, when they stand in the way of their unauthorized Christian communion."*

The sentiments of Mr. Hill on this subject will be further seen from the following letter given to one of his communicants on his removal to Northampton, where he wished to be united with the open-communion Baptist church.

"May 22d, 1829.

"My dear Friend,

"Though we naturally lament the loss of those who are dear to us in the Lord, yet we rejoice that their removal from us is not a removal from the means of grace, so essential to our spiritual profit in the divine life.

"The Baptist congregation at Northampton has at all times held a warm place in my affection and regard, as it respects their love to all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, and prove the same by a holy correspondent life and conversation. In this sense only we should

* Life by Jones, p. 163.

hold what may be called *a strict* communion but when our communion with each other is found inadmissible on account of our less important differences about the mere circumstantials of religion, or the administration of a religious ordinance, this should not be called *strict* but *sectarian* communion. I am persuaded our good liberal-minded loving-hearted friends at Northampton will not ask you any questions of such a minor consideration, but come at once to the essential point, whether by the power of the converting grace of the Gospel you have passed from death unto life, and consequently have been enabled to live like those that are alive from the dead; and I am happy to testify there is no reason to doubt respecting the consistency of your conduct while you continued in connexion with us. With my hearty love to your minister, Mr. Grey, and all my kind Northampton friends, believe me to be

"Yours ever affectionately,

"ROWLAND HILL."

Mr. W. Rice.

The writer has, he trusts, faithfully recorded the sentiments of his esteemed friend on several important points. Throughout Mr. Hill's ministerial course, his great objection to the

Congregational system was the want of a court of appeal in the event of disputes happening in particular churches. Although such an appeal is not considered necessary by Congregationalists, yet practically it has been felt to be sometimes desirable. Hence, whilst India has received her Episcopal bishops, the churches in Africa have received bishop Philip, under the modern but modest name of Superintendent of the Missions.

"I own I am disposed to think," remarks Dr. Pye Smith,* "that the most perfect church polity would be the union of a convenient number of Independent churches within a circle of two or three miles into an effectively beneficial association, yet each having its own pastor or bishop, and also possessing a general superintendent, as do the Lutherans and our Wesleyan brethren. This would little, if at all, differ from the great and good Archbishop Usher's, or Mr. Baxter's plans of a reduced or reformed Episcopacy. Thus it might be hoped that we should enjoy the benefits of each of the three politics; the *Congregational* for the sound basis; the *Presbyterian* for consolidation, extended

* Sermon on Temper to be cultivated, &c. p. 56.

communication, and active efforts in spreading the kingdom of Christ;* and the *Episcopal*, for promoting unity of character, and well organized and directed action in our endeavours to "shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life." This plan appears to approach very near to the views entertained by Mr. Hill. Many years since, it is understood that he was anxious to unite Surrey Chapel with several other places of religious worship in London, for the purpose of attaining objects similar to those pointed out in this extract, but failed in accomplishing his wishes.

* "The absolute need of a combination of ministers and churches seems now to be generally felt, and to a certain degree acted upon by almost every respectable body of Christians, whatever name they assume; for what can an insulated congregation or individual do, in extending the empire of Christianity? The valuable combination of godly men in the Church Missionary Society, although of the Episcopal church, may be adduced as an example; and all these combinations for educating, and approving, and sending forth missionaries to the heathen, and superintending their conduct in foreign countries, are of a similar character. These all partake of the essential traits of Presbyterian combination, so far as concerns the individual missionaries employed, and the grand

Mr. Hill's opinions having been given, the reader will discover that he was an Episcopalian in sentiment, but in practice he approached to Presbyterianism. The fact was, that being unable to remain in the Established Church, and having failed in his efforts to unite other dissenting bodies with Surrey Chapel, he adopted a system which he considered to be scriptural, and calculated to promote the peace of his people,—and it appears to have worked well under his administration.

object of evangelizing the heathen. The Church Missionary Society is not under the government of diocesan bishops, but under that of a voluntary Society of associated brethren, who are all equal in power; and the other societies are all a virtual acknowledgment that the Congregational system must be converted into mutual association in the accomplishment of any grand and extensive enterprise." Dr. Stewart on Presbyterian Eldership, p. 5.

CHAP. XII.

MR. HILL'S LIBERAL VIEWS AS TO DIFFERENT SECTIONS OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

CENSURES ON MR. HILL—CHURCH GOVERNMENT AMONG SECONDARY THINGS—EXTRACT FROM "DISSENT NOT SCHISM"—LIBERALITY OF MR. HILL, WITHOUT BEING INDIFFERENT TO ESSENTIAL TRUTH—THE CHURCHMAN AND DISSENTER IN PRAYER—CONVERSATION ON ATTENDING EVANGELICAL PREACHING—INTERESTING ANECDOTE OF DR. GILBEE—OUTWARD FORMS INSUFFICIENT TO SAVE THE SOUL—THE CHARACTER OF A GOOD MINISTER—REMARKS ON MR. WESLEY—EXTRACT FROM RECORD NEWSPAPER—THE OPINIONS OF THE REV. HENRY VENN, AND THE REV. DAVID SIMPSON, ON HEARING THE GOSPEL—THE REV. MR. MOORHOUSE, OF HUDDERSFIELD—ORIGINAL LETTER—SAINTS' DAYS—THE SOCINIAN'S REMARK—THE LANCASHIRE WOMAN—THE MINISTER'S APOLOGY—REMARKS ON SPECIAL DAYS FIXED BY THE CHURCH.

THE subject of this memoir has been severely censured, by some, for his partial wanderings from the episcopal church; but by others he has been condemned for not completely embracing the principles of nonconformity. His esteemed friend, Mr. Sidney, gently chastises his beloved relative, by his strictures on another clergyman. "Mr. Venn," he observes, "in occupying Surrey Chapel pulpit, forgot

the observance of ecclesiastical discipline and order; it was an act of irregularity, contrary to canonical rules, and therefore not advisable even in those days."*

The other biographer speaks of "Mr. Hill's glaring inconsistency, in trimming between the conformists and nonconformists, which he states can only be resolved into his total unacquaintedness with the nature, constitution, laws, and discipline of the churches of Christ, as laid down in the New Testament."†

Now, though the Scotch Baptist biographer of Mr. Hill can see so clearly his own views in every page of the New Testament, yet there are men of equal authority, who, in the exercise of a becoming candour, will admit the modest pretensions of some who may happen to differ from them.

"We believe," remarks an eloquent writer, "that God has placed church government among *secondary* things, and that, therefore, for persons really to be separated from the church of Christ, they must deny and dissent from fundamental truth, and not merely err in subordinate points of faith, or in matters of

* See Sidney's Life, p. 158. † Jones's Life, p. 38.

ecclesiastical order. Admitting, for the sake of argument, that episcopacy is right, this would not prove that all other forms are fundamentally wrong—*so* wrong, that, however their advocates might embrace the verities of the Gospel, they could not be saved. The whole spirit of the New Testament is opposed to this proud and uncharitable exclusiveness. It places individual safety in "repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ," and it exhibits the oneness of believers, as consisting in this spiritual fellowship with their Head, and with each other. With respect to all that is external and circumstantial and secondary in our religion, there is, if I may so speak, the incessant display of a noble indifference, because there is always the spirit of a sublime and generous catholicity."*

"The three great forms of church government, episcopacy, presbyterianism, and congregationalism, when brought honestly and impartially to the test of Scripture, are all right and all wrong,—though right and wrong in different degrees. There is something in the record in favour of all, but the book is not the

* Dissent not Schism, p. 63.

exclusive property of any. There is more, perhaps, in support of each system, than the thorough-going advocates of the others will admit. There is more of episcopacy than is quite palatable to the Presbyterian and the Independent; there is more of Presbyterianism, than the Episcopalian can easily digest; and there is more of Congregationalism than either the priest or the presbyter can manage to get rid of; while, therefore, I have my personal convictions of what, in my view, is most accordant with primitive usage, most agreeable to the spirit of the Gospel, and adapted to universality, yet I believe that all the systems, if worked by spiritual men, and for spiritual purposes, will be acceptable to God, their societies, *churches*, and their advocates, "heirs together of the grace of life." Each "holding the Head," and striving "in godly sincerity" to serve him, and, while seeking to do so in that mode believed to be best, looking out with an eye of delight, and a heart of affection, on those who, in *their* way, are trying to do the same,—cultivating intercourse and communion with them,—and constantly saying, in their salutations and their prayers, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sin-

cerity;" such men, *whoever they might be*, and such societies, *whatever was their form*, would have nothing about them of a schism, or a sect."*

These enlightened sentiments harmonize with the views of Mr. Hill which have been given in a former part of this memoir. He was able most conscientiously to hold affectionate fellowship with the people of God, wherever he found them. He, therefore, remarks, "I feel it would be my privilege to hold Christian communion with every Protestant church upon earth. Were I in Germany, it never would be a question with me, "Are you Lutherans or Calvinists,—but are you Christians? Nor would it distract my brains, or concern me, if their modes and forms did not altogether suit my judgment or taste; and were I to attempt the reformation of such matters at the expense of peace, I should do abundantly more harm than good by it. I wish people would act more according to that excellent prayer in our church liturgy, that we may be "kept in the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life."†

* Dissent not Schism, p. 70.

† Village Dialogues, vol. iii. p. 107, 26th ed.

"Nothing," he remarks, "but a small line of demarcation separates some religions—a little river separates the Presbyterian church from the Church of England. At this side of the Tweed I am a Church of England man,—on the other side I am a Presbyterian; a little step across a stream of water makes the whole difference with me."*

Mr. Hill was not indifferent to Christian principle; but he considered truth far more important than the peculiarities of any system.

"There are essential truths," said he, "by which we must abide; but if you saw a good churchman and a good dissenter upon their knees, you would not be able to find out which was which. If you would close your eyes against something that you saw in the places, and not close your ears against the prayers that were offered up, you would not be able to tell whether it was a churchman or a dissenter that was engaged in that solemn duty."†

Mr. Hill could preach without his gown in a dissenting pulpit, or appear in the knotted cloak and long bands of his Presbyterian

* British and Foreign School Society Meeting, 1827.

† Meeting of the Missionary Society, 1830.

brother. In these respects he could truly "become all things to all men, that he might win some."

In the course of frequent interviews between the writer and Mr. Hill, many of his opinions were elicited; the conversation once turned upon the advice frequently given by clergymen to their people, to continue their attendance at church, though evangelical doctrines should not be preached. The good man, with peculiar energy, exclaimed, "Sir, if I should not be permitted to speak to my dear people again, tell them, that if the Socinian, or Antinomian, should ever gain possession of the Surrey Chapel pulpit—or any other errors should be preached in it—that they have my authority to run away from the place as hard as they are able; for it is the Gospel they must hear." On inquiring whether he had been personally acquainted with the late Dr. Gilbee, he replied, "Oh! yes; I knew him very well; but what do *you* know about him?" I told him that a friend once asked the Doctor his advice upon this subject. "The Gospel has left our parish church,—where am I to go?" "As a churchman," said Dr. G——, "hear the truth in the establishment if you can; but if you cannot

find it there, go to the meeting-house; if it is not there, and you hear that it is to be found at the bottom of a coal-pit twenty miles from your residence,—go there, Sir: you *must* hear the Gospel."

Mr. Hill was remarkably attentive to this fact, and when I paused, I saw the tear starting from his eye. "Oh," said he "that was just like Dr. Gilbee. He preached at St. Bride's Church several years since, for the Missionary Society. His text was, 'Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold, them also must I bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd.' I shall never forget that sermon. I stood near the pulpit door, — and had much difficulty in restraining my feelings; and when I found the preacher was about to conclude, I thought, how I should like to call out, 'Go on, Dr. Gilbee; let us have a little more of this good stuff, before you finish.' At the close of the service I went into the vestry to see the good man. I said to him, 'Dear Dr. Gilbee, will you permit a poor old unworthy servant of your Divine Master, to thank you for your good sermon.' 'Come in, dear Mr. Hill,' said he, 'I am happy to see you. I once wandered into your

chapel—the music charmed me—and there it was I felt the power of the truth.' 'Judge,' said Mr. Hill, 'what my feelings were!' He added, 'Now you know Dr. Gilbee's spiritual papa, you do not wonder at the advice he gave. He was a chip of the old block, Sir.'"*

In one of Mr. Hill's publications he gives the like opinion: "Some have said, that if we have not the Gospel in the pulpit, we are sure to have it in the reading-desk, and that therefore we ought to wait. But how few, if any, were ever known to be converted to God by the mere reading of the church prayers; and how disgusting also to hear such excellent prayers read by improper men! how much is it less than blasphemy and hypocrisy conjoined? Well may it be said by the prophet, 'Who hath required this at *your* hands, thus to tread his courts?'"

* Dr. Gilbee was eighteen years rector of Barby, in Northamptonshire. He preached for the London Missionary Society, at St. Bride's Church, in May, 1812, and died on the 3rd of October, 1813, in his fiftieth year. It appears that his mind was deeply affected by hearing sung, "Jesus, lover of my soul," &c. How frequently a solemn hymn has prepared the mind of a sinner for the reception of the Gospel!

In the Apology for Sunday-Schools, Mr. Hill, when speaking of the attendance of the children at different places of worship, remarks, "If they meet with a bad minister in a meeting, they may seek for a good one in a church; and if a bad preacher be found in a church, they, on the other hand, may seek for a good one in the meeting. It is fit that the best ministers should be best attended; and as for bad ones, it matters not how much they are neglected."

In the Village Dialogues we find the following sentiments on the same subject: "Who can bear the thought, that a set of ruined sinners should have their eyes and hopes turned from God, to seek for salvation in the mere outward forms of their different churches?"*

The deep importance which Mr. Hill attached to the duty of a Christian to attend only upon an evangelical ministry, will be seen by the following extracts from his works.

"That is the best minister who lives best, and does the most good; mere outward parties are of little or no consideration whatever. If people have a bad minister in the church, it is a mercy that they may provide themselves with a good minister in a meeting-house, or

* Village Dialogues, vol. iii. p. 91.

wherever else they are permitted to assemble: when bad men are suffered to fill a good office, it is only the more injurious to the cause: good men should be equally respected, however denominated, who fill up their stations to the glory of God, and for the good of souls."*

"Let the regular ministers of the Established Church be as lovely in their behaviour, and as respectable in their conduct as they should be, while they fill a station so honourable and respectable in itself, and it will soon appear what love and respect they will universally command. But if people are expected to adore every thing that is cloaked in a cassock, however ignorant, profligate, or profane, the idolization of such a priesthood is not only abominable in itself, but will be the utter destruction of all morality in the land."†

In his answer to some of Mr. Wesley's remarks, Mr. Hill appeals to his people at large, whether he does not treat them as the *meanest dupes*, in commanding them to go nowhere but to their parish churches, let the minister be ever so erroneous in his principles;

* Religious Freedom, p. 45.

† Investigation on Parochial Assessments of Chapels, p. 40.

and in proudly forbidding them to attend upon the ministry of any besides, excepting his own and such as receive their commission from him. He says, "If the clergy *are strangers to God*, what says the Lord Jesus,—'*My sheep hear my voice, and a stranger* THEY WILL NOT FOLLOW.' But Mr. John Wesley gives an absolute command to all Christ's sheep, whether real or supposed, in his connexion, TO FOLLOW STRANGERS."*

If Mr. Hill considered it the solemn duty of a pious churchman to *hear* the Gospel wherever he could find it, the true catholicity of his mind is seen from the fact, that he gave the dissenter the very same advice. In the Village Dialogues he says, "It is better to follow the Gospel than a party."† And then Mr. Traffic adds, "So we have left the meeting, and do not mean to go there again, unless we should have the same Gospel preached there as once was when old Mr. Trueman was the minister, in my grandfather's time."

"Can he," Mr. Hill feelingly inquired, "that is a godly preacher, wish us for a moment to leave the care of our immortal souls in the

* Answer to Wesley, p. 36, 37.

† Village Dialogues, Vol. i. p. 180. See also Vol. ii. p. 103. 26th ed.

hands of one that never had a thought of taking the least care of his own? It never yet was known that God gave signal tokens of his divine favour but where the Gospel is faithfully and affectionately preached and applied to the souls of men." There can be no doubt that Mr. Hill's advice to a pious churchman would have been, "keep as near the church, as it regards her doctrines and liturgy, as circumstances will allow; but you must statedly hear the glorious Gospel of the blessed God faithfully and constantly preached." *

The opinions of several excellent clergymen, whose labours were eminently blessed, fully harmonize with Mr. Hill's on the important point which has now been fully stated. His much-valued friend, the Rev. Henry Venn, the vicar of Huddersfield, and his old college com-

* The following inquiries appeared in the *Record Newspaper*, for July 22, 1830:—

"1. Is not *preaching* the Gospel the great ordinance of the divine Redeemer? He said, '*Preach* the Gospel to every creature,' and 'Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.' Am I justified in concluding that forms of prayer, however scriptural, and the reading of the holy word, is an acceptable substitute for the *preaching* of the Gospel? and may

panion, David Simpson of Macclesfield, were among the number.

After Mr. Venn left Huddersfield, remarks his biographer, the people who had profited by his preaching were repelled from the parish church by discourses which formed a marked contrast to those they had lately heard within the same walls; so that they were dispersed in various directions; some to neighbouring churches, some to dissenting chapels. Several

I, without the faithful preaching of the word, expect the fulfilment of the promise of the Lord's presence in his sanctuary?

"2. Is it not my duty to teach my children to attend only where the Gospel is evangelically preached? If they attend an unenlightened minister, whose instructions are contrary to the word of God, what course am I to pursue? Am I, at the close of every sermon, to intreat them not to follow the advice of their minister; or how am I to act, so as to discharge my solemn duty as a parent, and yet to uphold the importance of the ministerial office?

"3. Am I not, as a Christian, responsible for my example? Am I not to be 'a light in the world;' 'a city set upon a hill?' If so, am I entirely clear from the blood of those who perish under an unfaithful minister, when I have sanctioned that minister by my constant attendance upon him? Suppose I am called to visit a dying man. I find he has built upon the

of them at length determined upon building a chapel,* in the hope that they might be united together in one body, under a pastor of their own choice. Mr. Venn gave his sanction and assistance to this plan, and advised the people to attend the chapel after it was built."† He also printed an affectionate pastoral letter to

wrong foundation. I tell him my fears: he is surprised at the intelligence he receives from me, and remarks, 'We have both attended the *same* minister. I thought you were right. I believed in the doctrines of our guide; am I wrong?' and before I can give him correct information he expires. Am I not responsible for my example under these circumstances?

"I have from my earliest youth had a solemn reverence for the ministerial office; but I feel perplexed when I endeavour to separate the office from the man who fills it, and particularly when I read the language of the holy Apostle St. Paul, 'Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.' Upon which Mr. Scott, in his excellent Commentary, remarks, 'Let us for ourselves keep at the utmost distance from the terrible anathema, and *caution* all men against those who thus 'pervert the Gospel of Christ.'"

* Highfield Chapel, long under the pastoral care of the venerable Mr. Moorhouse, and subsequently of the late Dr. Boothroyd.

† Life of Rev. Henry Venn, p. 174.

the people, dated the very week that the chapel was opened; and, with a liberality very uncommon, most cordially recommended the late Mr. Moorhouse as their minister, in which office he continued among them above fifty years, with great acceptance and success.*

When the Rev. David Simpson was leaving Buckingham, a parishioner to whose conversion his ministry had been instrumental, fearing that his successor's sentiments were very different, asked his advice. Mr. Simpson, keeping in view the inspired direction, "Take heed *what* ye hear," and the meeting-house supplying the instruction the church wanted, said, without hesitation, "Join the Dissenters."†

The following letter from Mr. Hill to a ministerial brother, who had erected a chapel in a parish, where the people had long been in darkness, but in which a new episcopal church had been erected, will profitably close these remarks.

"London, May 9, 1822.

"My dear Sir,

"If a church is built near the standard you have fixed for the Gospel, and the Gospel is still

* See Evangelical Register for August, 1836. p. 289.

† Life of Simpson, by Sir J.B. Williams, p. 58.

kept out of the pulpit, the people will soon be tired of the poor thin morality of the day; and if the Gospel should be preached, it will only add strength to the sacred cause. Where the carcase is, there the eagles will be gathered together. If the Lord is pleased to fill your soul with much of the power of his divine Spirit, that will give an unction and richness to the words that drop from your lips, which will, by the Divine blessing, take it home to the hearts of the hearers, and give you a congregation which will prove your consolation and your support.

"May we all feel how much we need of God in the sacred work, and then we shall deal more with him that we may be enabled to deal better with the people. They who deal in the false commerce of unfelt truth, generally have their labour for their pains.

"That the Lord may give you souls for your hire, is the sincere prayer of

"Your's, for Christ's sake,

"ROWLAND HILL."

The seasons set apart by the Established Church in commemoration of the leading events connected with the birth, death, resurrection, and ascension of the great Redeemer, were

always high seasons of spiritual enjoyment to Mr. Hill. He considered that the Reformers had shown great wisdom in retaining those days, but he had no superstitious veneration for them.* He always considered them to be times of man's appointment, and the observance of them not *binding* upon the conscience. In his opinion, it was important that the great events connected with the work of redemption should be specially brought before the church on fixed occasions, and not left to the ordinary discussions of the pulpit. Can there be any special difficulty in the way of such a plan being universally adopted by the churches? There might be special services, without connecting particular days with these services. "Every day," Mr. Hill remarked, "ought to be a Christmas-day with a Christian;" and no day can be improper for the special consideration of subjects so sacred and so essentially important.

In the last sermon preached by Mr. Hill, he says, "There is no more superstition in our commemorating the death of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, the ascension of Christ, and the descent of the Spirit of God, than there is in our Government sometimes setting apart

* See Vil. Dialog. vol. iii. page 73.

days of humiliation or thanksgiving, and appointing a form of prayer to be read thereon. None of these things are bad, unless they are made bad. For my part, I love the recurrence of these days. It is a pleasure to think that there are times in which our minds are most solemnly called to meditate upon the spiritual blessings we enjoy."*

Perhaps some Christian brethren, in their zeal to depart from what they considered to be error, have gone to extremes, and have given up those practices of the church which might be attended to with considerable benefit to their hearers. It was a pleasing sight to see Mr. Hill enter the pulpit on a Christmas morning when his mind was in a happy peaceful state. The notes of the organ announced the Christmas hymn, and the congregation were heard repeating

> "Hark! the herald angels sing
> Glory to the new-born King.
> Peace on earth, and mercy mild:
> God and sinners reconciled."

The prayer was generally the language of gratitude for God's "unspeakable Gift," and his sermon an illustration of the truth, "God was

* Rev. R. Hill's Last Sermon, page 40.

manifest in the flesh." On Christmas day, Good Friday, Easter and Ascension Sundays, he was accustomed to attack the Socinian heresy. His remarks were simple and scriptural. There was a little anecdote he was fond of mentioning on these occasions, and which was often repeated when the memory of the pastor began to fail. "I was preaching once at Exeter, when I made some free observations on the Socinian controversy. The minister, of that denomination, was present. I was told that when he left the chapel he remarked, "Poor old man, his faculties are fading fast." Soon afterwards I preached for my dear friend Mr. Roby, who shines so brightly at Manchester; and after the service was over, an old woman said, 'Dear old gentleman, 'tis a pity he should ever go to heaven.'" He would then make very amusing comments on the different opinions entertained of him, or rather the truth he preached, by his orthodox and heterodox hearers.

About two years before his death, he preached on the morning of Christmas-day. In the evening an Independent minister was to occupy the pulpit, who thought it right to say to the good man, that the sermon he intended to preach was

not strictly applicable to the season, which he hoped would be excused. "What, Sir," said Mr. Hill, in rather a commanding tone, "no sermon suitable for Christmas-day! why, Sir, the New Testament is full of Christmas-day; you'll have no difficulty, Sir, in giving the people a suitable sermon."

The wise arrangement of the Scriptures which is used in the church on these special seasons, will be seen by only examining the selections read in the morning service on Christmas-day. In these portions of Holy Scripture, the great truths connected with the humanity and Divinity of the Saviour's nature are clearly and fully set forth. The word of God cannot be read altogether in vain. It may therefore be desirable for brethren dissenting from the Established Church to consider whether the cause of truth might not be advanced by the introduction of a practice somewhat like that which Mr. Hil found beneficial in his own congregation.

CHAP. XIII.

MR. HILL'S SENTIMENTS ON BAPTISM.

INFANT BAPTISM—BAPTISMAL REGENERATION NOT SCRIPTURAL—WALKER, OF TRURO—MODE OF BAPTIZING AT SURREY CHAPEL—BAPTISM NOT CONFINED TO MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH—BAPTISM AT ANNAN, IN SCOTLAND—ON GODFATHERS, ETC.—EXTRACT FROM TERTULLIAN—CONFIRMATION—ITS ABUSE—FACTS SHEWING ITS USEFULNESS—PHILIP HENRY—CONDUCT TOWARD BAPTIZED CHILDREN AND CATECHUMENS—HINTS TO PEDO-BAPTIST MINISTERS—INTERESTING SERVICE AT CAMBERWELL.

THE excellent pastor of Surrey Chapel endeavoured to walk before his people in all the commandments of the Lord. He constantly supported the doctrine of infant baptism, and affectionately urged all parents *publicly* to dedicate their children to God, which he considered to be their peculiar privilege. It is, however, due to his memory distinctly to state, that he objected to the formularies of the Church of England on this subject.

Mr. Hill could not believe in what he considered the unscriptural doctrine of baptismal regeneration. "It has sometimes been said," he remarks, "that regeneration is identical with Christian baptism. What can be more contrary to Scripture? How is it possible to suppose that a mere application of an *outward* ordinance can *inwardly* purify the heart? What is baptism but 'an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace?' Shall the mere shadow or sign pass for the thing signified thereby? If the inward and spiritual grace be not found in our hearts, our baptism will only rise up in judgment against us. Instead of harbouring the mistaken idea that baptism is regeneration, we had better pray, as in the Collect for Christmas-day, that we, 'being regenerate, and made God's children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by his Holy Spirit,' and then we shall perfectly love him, and worthily magnify his holy name; but never till then." *

* Dialogues in Prison. See also Village Dialogues, vol. i. D. 4. 1. For full information on the unscriptural tenet of baptismal regeneration, see the authorities collected in the Memoir of the Rev. Legh Richmond, by Grimshawe, in the 82d and following pages.

In reference to Mr. Walker of Truro, Mr. Hill makes the following observations. "His lectures on the Church Catechism prove that he was no friend to the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, as upheld by some to supersede the need of personal regeneration, which must be accomplished upon the hearts of all that are by grace made meet for glory. He was much better taught than to suppose that the mere outward administration of an ordinance could be any thing further than a sign of what *should be*, and not the thing itself, which *must be;* satisfied that such a mere popish explanation of that ordinance must be very injurious to the souls of men, so as to make them live in stupid ignorance of the necessity of being renewed in the spirit of their minds. He gives his readers to understand, that however we may be outwardly admitted to the privileges of Christianity by the administration of the outward and visible sign, yet all would be of no avail without the inward and spiritual grace?" *

It was the practice of Mr. Hill to announce from the pulpit the day on which he intended to baptize the children belonging to his people.

* Sidney's Life of Walker, p. 289.

The baptismal service was commenced by singing a hymn: then the pastor delivered a suitable address, in which he gave his opinions in favour of infant baptism, in a brief but scriptural manner. He affectionately pointed out the solemn duties the parents had to discharge, and strongly enforced upon them the great importance of a holy example. At the close of his address, the pastor offered up an earnest prayer to the God of all grace, that he would be pleased to bless the parents, and that the children, from earliest infancy, might become the devoted followers of the Divine Redeemer. He then received the child from its father, and baptized it in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Mr. Hill did not confine the rite of baptism to the children of his own members, but administered the ordinance to the children of all parents who professed the Christian faith, without reference to their particular denominations. He mentions the following fact in one of his tours in the north.

"Had I rode blindfold into Scotland, I should have known where I was by the following circumstance:—The worthy minister at Annan had a child who could walk alone, and, contrary

to the good man's wish, it remained unbaptized, because none of the numerous sects would baptize it, but as it was to be baptized in that sect. Having but just left my own country, with my free, easy, English conscience, I baptized the child, without enforcing any thing further on the parents than that they were bound by that ordinance to dedicate their child to God; to teach it repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, without cramming its head with the useless decisions of the different sects of the day."*

On the baptism of children Mr. Hill required the presence of both parents, if living; but he did not consider the episcopal system of godfathers and godmothers to be necessary, since it did not appear to be sanctioned by the custom of the primitive church.†

* The Rev. Philip Henry, in baptizing a child, desired the congregation to bear witness that he did not baptize that child into the church of England, nor into the church of Scotland, nor into the church of the Dissenters, nor into the church at Broad Oak—but into the visible catholic church of Jesus Christ. Life of P. Henry, p. 194.

† See Village Dialogues, vol. i. p. 91. On this subject Tertullian also speaks, as quoted by Lord

The practice of confirmation, Mr. Hill did not recommend, and was generally silent upon the point. It is, however, worthy of the consideration of all dissenting from the church, whether they have sufficiently considered the privilege and importance of the act of baptism. A child is presented to the church by this ordinance, and solemnly dedicated to the Lord; but the fact is too frequently forgotten. It is sometimes to be feared, that when persons leave the communion of the established church, there is danger of their going to extreme points. Hence, some things are rejected altogether, when a modification of them might be useful. These remarks apply to the confirmation service of the church of England.

That it is frequently misunderstood, most will admit. The writer knew a young man who

Chancellor King, in his work on Church Government:—"What necessity is there that sponsors should expose themselves to danger, who, through death, may fail of the performance of their promises, or may be deceived by the wicked dispositions of those they promise for?" Justin Martyr, Tertullian's senior by fifty years, when he enumerates the method and form of baptism, says not one word about sponsors or godfathers, as may be seen in his 'Second Apology,' p. 93, 94."

refused to be confirmed. "I was regenerated at the time of my baptism," he remarked, "when my godfathers and godmother took upon themselves all future responsibility about my soul. If I am confirmed, then all will rest on my own shoulders." That the ordinance of confirmation is often abused, must also be acknowledged: it is painful to witness the light and thoughtless conduct of thousands who go to be confirmed. An attention to dress engages more time than the state of the soul. It is deeply affecting to see such persons rushing to the holy communion, "eating and drinking condemnation to themselves,—not discerning the Lord's body." That this ordinance has been spiritually blessed, must also be admitted. A lady in the west of England informed the writer that one, if not both, of her beloved daughters, had been mercifully led to the Saviour's feet by his blessing on the confirmation service. But mark the circumstances of the case. The parents had trained up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The vicar of the parish, and his curate, were holy, devoted men, and, long before the time appointed for confirmation arrived, these ministers frequently conversed and prayed with

their youthful charge. The great truths of the Gospel were unfolded, and the necessity of personal piety enforced. The young people, with minds thus prepared, presented themselves first to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls: and then to the earthly bishop. This was like the primitive saints, mentioned in the 2nd of Corinthians, viii. 5, "who *first* gave their own selves to the Lord, and then unto the apostles, by the will of God, insomuch that they desired Titus, that, as he had begun, so he would also finish in them the same grace also."

In the life of the pious Philip Henry, his practice in reference to the improvement of baptism, and the admission of his catechumens into the church, is thus noticed by his biographer, and the example may suggest to ministers the great importance of spiritually improving this divine ordinance.

He drew up the following short form of the baptismal covenant, for the use of his children:

I take God the Father to be my chiefest good, and highest end.

I take God the Son to be my Prince and Saviour.

I take God the Holy Ghost to be my Sanctifier, Teacher, Guide, and Comforter.

I take the word of God to be my rule in all my actions.

And the people of God to be my people in all conditions.

I do likewise devote and dedicate unto the Lord my whole self, all I am, all I have, and all I can do.

And this I do deliberately, sincerely, freely, and for ever.

This he taught his children, and they each of them solemnly repeated it every Lord's day, in the evening, after they were catechized, he putting his amen to it, and sometimes adding, "So say, and so do, and you are made for ever."

He also took pains with them to lead them into the understanding of it, and to persuade them to a free and cheerful consent to it. And when they grew up, he made them all write it over severally with their own hands, and very solemnly set their names to it, which he told them he would keep by him, and it should be produced as a testimony against them, in case they should afterwards depart from God, and turn from following after him.*

* Life of the Rev. Philip Henry, A.M. by Sir J. B. Williams, D.D. p. 83.

In dealing with his children about their spiritual state, he took hold of them very much by the handle of their infant baptism, — and frequently inculcated upon them that they were born in God's house, and were betimes dedicated and given up to him, — and therefore were obliged to be his servants, Psa. cxvi. 16, "I am thy servant, because *the son of thine handmaid.*" This he was wont to illustrate to them by the comparison of taking a lease of a fair estate for a child in the cradle, and putting his life into it. The child then knows nothing of the matter, nor is he capable of consenting; however, then he is maintained out of it, and hath an interest in it. And when he grows up, and becomes able to choose and refuse for himself,—if he go to his landlord, and claim the benefit of the lease, and promise to pay the rent, and do the services; well and good—he hath the benefit of it: if otherwise, it is at his peril. "Now, children, (would he say,) our great Landlord was willing that your lives should be put into the lease of heaven and happiness, and it was done accordingly by your baptism, 'which is the seal of the righteousness that is by faith,' and by that it was assured to you, that if you would pay the rent, and do the

service, that is, live a life of faith and repentance, and sincere obedience, you shall never be turned off the tenement; but if now you dislike the terms, and refuse to pay this rent (this *chief rent*, so he would call it, for it is *no rack*,) you forfeit the lease. However, you cannot but say that you had a kindness done you, to have your lives put into it. Thus did he frequently deal with his children, and even travail in birth again to see Christ formed in them; and from this topic he generally argued; and he would often say,—"If infant baptism were more improved, it would be less disputed."‡

"The admission of young people out of the rank of catechumens into that of communicants, had a peculiar solemnity in it. Such as he catechized, when they grew up to some years of discretion, if he observed them to be intelligent and serious, and to set their faces heavenward, he marked them out to be admitted to the Lord's supper; and when he had a competent number of such, twelve or fifteen perhaps, or more, he ordered each of them to come to him severally, and discoursed with them of the things belonging to their everlasting peace, put it to their choice whom they would serve, and

‡ Life of Philip Henry, p. 83.

endeavoured to affect them with those things with which by their catechism they had been made acquainted, drawing them with the cords of a man, and the bands of love, into the way which is called holy. For several Lord's-days he catechized them, particularly in public, touching the Lord's supper and the duty of preparation for it, and their baptismal covenant, which in that ordinance they were to take upon themselves, and make their own act and deed; often telling them upon such occasions, that they were not to oblige themselves to any more than what they were already obliged to by their baptisms, only to bind themselves faster to it. Then he appointed a day in the week before the ordinance, when in a solemn assembly on purpose he prayed for them, and preached a sermon to them proper to their age and circumstances; and so the following Sabbath they were all received together to the Lord's supper. This he looked upon as the right confirmation, or transition into the state of adult church membership."*

Cannot those Christian denominations of this country, which conscientiously object to the confirmation service, adopt some plan for the

* Life of Philip Henry, p. 195-6.

special benefit of their baptized charge? It might be practicable in the morning of one Sabbath in the year to consider the duties of Christian parents in reference to those children who have been devoted to God in baptism. The afternoon of the same day might be set apart for the children themselves, to point out their responsibility in reference to the special privilege they have enjoyed;† and the evening might be devoted to an affectionate address to the

† Since writing the above, the author has met with the following account of an interesting service at the chapel of a respectable minister of the Baptist denomination at Camberwell. After referring to several meetings which had been held, it is stated—"The last meeting was in its design more special, and in the mode of conducting it more novel, than the rest. It was an assembly of Christian parents bringing their children with them, to present them before the Lord in his holy temple. After prayer by one of the deacons, the word of God was read, and the parents were addressed in the presence of their children, on parental obligations and responsibilities. They were then requested to withdraw into the chapel, and plead in earnest prayer for them, while the children remained in the vestry with the pastor, to be affectionately exhorted and prayed for by him. When these separate exercises were finished, the parents returned to the vestry. Their hearts were full—they wept over their beloved

members of the church, explaining the duties which devolve on them in connexion with the children who have been baptized. It is to be feared that the frequent neglect of our children gives our Baptist brethren strong grounds for considering that we feel the ordinance to be one of little importance. Let our children be brought into the temple every year, and the Lord will meet with them there. The sympathies of the minister and the church will be drawn out for them, and prayer will ascend to the throne of God that his promises to believing parents may be fulfilled in the saving conversion of their beloved offspring.

offspring; and when two verses had been sung, and a few parting admonitions had been given by the pastor, he commended them to God in prayer, and so the meeting concluded."—Baptist Magazine, April, 1836, p. 162.

CHAP. XIV.

MR. HILL'S INTERCOURSE WITH DIFFERENT DENOMINATIONS.

MR. HILL'S REMARKS ON UNION WITH DISSENTERS—"BETTER LOVE CHRISTIANS THAN PARTIES"—THE OPINIONS OF BATES, HOWE, BAXTER, CALAMY, HENRY, AND WATTS, ON CATHOLIC COMMUNION—ON INTERCHANGE OF PULPITS BETWEEN EVANGELICAL PREACHERS—"ORDER AND DECORUM"—DR. STEINKOPFF—OPINION ON SCHISM—ON THE RIGHT OF PRIVATE JUDGMENT—MR. LOCKE'S OPINIONS ON THAT POINT—STATE PROSECUTIONS—USEFULNESS OF THE DISSENTERS—ALL RESPECTABLE DISSENTING PULPITS OPENED TO MR. HILL—"THE DISSENTER BORN"—THE BOAT—MR. HILL'S OCCUPATION OF CHURCH PULPITS.

PERHAPS few men ever lived, who more sincerely prayed with the apostle, "Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity," than the subject of this memoir. He could not consider that the separate folds in which the members of the church were found, rendered it necessary that there should be any alienation of affection amongst them. He often rejoiced "that the party wall of separation was so much lowered in his days, that Christians could kindly shake hands over it." In his view, pure religious

principle was the only ground of union among all Christians.

The venerable man is condemned by one of his biographers, for inconsistency, in not entirely leaving a defective national church;* and his other biographer regrets the diminution of his usefulness, by his constant irregularities, in not keeping within its ecclesiastical enclosures.† Let the reader, then, examine the grounds of Mr. Hill's union with his dissenting brethren, of different denominations.

In a letter to the Rev. George Burder, he remarks,—

"What should be the real ground of union among *Christians* at large? What then constitutes that sacred character? the converting grace of God upon the soul, whereby we are led to feel our exceeding sinfulness before him, and are directed to seek for salvation through Jesus Christ alone; let this be evidenced by a holy conformity to the mind and will of God, and then, let it be asked, if these be not the real members of the church of Christ below—and

* Jones's Life, p. 314.

† Sidney's Life of Hill, p. 413.

whether they will not be owned as such, when called to meet in the general assembly or church above? Are we, then, to suppose that a mere difference about church discipline should be a sufficient ground of separation, among those who are all united in the same spiritual Head? If, notwithstanding a difference about meats offered unto idols, and a distinction of days, primitive Christians were still commanded to live in love and unity with each other; ought we not to adopt the same rule in the present day, and constrain the world to say, "See how these Christians love?" Supposing a Baptist should request communion with his pædobaptist brethren, would it be right in us to reject him because he withholds his child from the privilege of infant baptism? And how do we feel when we ask the same privilege in return, and receive for answer, "Oh, no, it is inadmissible: we do not doubt but that you are a believer,—but then in our esteem you are an *unbaptized* believer, and it is against our church rules to admit any such to be so closely connected with us, however closely they may be united to the Lord." O, my dear brother, how do you and I feel our hearts warmed at the name of an immortal Bunyan, who, though a

Baptist himself, was such a faithful witness against the bigots of his own denomination; and whose affectionate spirit was so open to hold communion with all who loved our common Lord: and, blessed be God, we do not want Bunyan baptists in the present day; long may they live, to build up the church of Christ in peace and love! How happy did I feel myself at Northampton, years ago, when I was admitted to Christian (not sectarian) communion, among just such a set of loving Christians, when the late Mr. John Ryland was pastor of that congregation;* and satisfied I am, that I do perfectly right, when desired to administer the communion in any dissenting congregation, immediately to comply, and respectfully follow the order they adopt among themselves. Is it not also, at least, a supposable idea, that the seven Asiatic churches might have adopted different modes of public worship, and perhaps of government also, and still esteemed themselves as in Christian fellowship with each other?†

He also adds, "From long experience, I am now fully satisfied that the Christian church is

* This excellent man died July 24, 1792.

† Warning to Professors, p. 74, 75.

best managed, when her kind and friendly doors are wide open to all who are truly righteous, and close shut against all those who, by their unrighteous deeds, prove that they know not God. It is by the *life* alone we are directed to judge, while to judge of *hearts* is the solemn prerogative of God."*

On these grounds Mr. Hill justified his attachment to "all the members of the household of faith." How nobly would he repeat the remark, "It is in my heart to hold communion with all who hold communion with the sacred Head, Christ Jesus; and whatever Christians, from the narrow rules of their church, choose to reject me, blessed be God, I dare not reject them."†

A very favourite aphorism with him was, "BETTER LOVE CHRISTIANS THAN PARTIES;"‡ a sentence which deserves to be recorded on the heart of every believer.

In contending for the communion of saints, Mr. Hill only followed the examples of many of the most illustrious of our divines. Among those truly catholic men who contended for

* Warning to Professors, p. 65. † First Journal, p. 37.
‡ Apology for Sunday Schools, p. 31.

occasional communion with the established church, will be found the names of Bates, Howe, Baxter, Calamy, Matthew Henry, and Watts. They urged the duty of communion with all Christians, on the great principle,—"In necessariis, unitas; in non necessariis, libertas; in omnibus, charitas."*

The excellent John Howe, in 1690, wrote his "humble requests both to conformists and dissenters, touching their temper and behaviour towards each other," which Dr. Calamy has preserved in his Life of Baxter. These requests should be read by all orthodox ministers, with humble prayer to God that their minds may be prepared to adopt the excellent advice they contain. After advising Christians "not to over-magnify their differences, or count them greater than they really are; carefully to

* See the numerous facts on this subject collected by Mr. Joshua Wilson, in his "Historical Inquiry," concerning the principles, opinions, and usages of the English Presbyterians, from the restoration of Charles the Second to the death of Queen Anne; in which it will be seen that the orthodox nonconformists clearly distinguished "between *fundamentals* and *little matters* of dispute."

abstain from judging each other's states Godward, upon their differences; not to value themselves upon being on this or that side of the severing line; not to despise one another for differences on lesser matters, or wonder that they differ, and not be offended mutually with one another for different choice of this or that way wherein they find most of real advantage and edification,—he adds, "But, above all, let us with sincere minds more earnestly endeavour the promoting the interest of religion itself, of true reformed Christianity, than of this or that party. Let us long to see the religion of Christians become simple, primitive, agreeable to its lovely original state, and again *itself*, and each in our own stations contribute thereto *all* that we are able. Let it be remembered that the difference lies among Christians and Protestants, not between such and *Pagans*. Let us, therefore, carry it accordingly towards each other; and consider, our assemblies are all Christian and Protestant assemblies, differing in their administrations, for the most part, not in the things prayed for, or deprecated, or taught, but in certain modes of expression. And differing really, and in the substance of things, less by mere conformity or noncon-

formity to the public rule of the law, than many of them that *are under it*, do from one another; and than divers that are not under it. For instance, go into one congregation, that is, a conforming one, and you have the public prayers read in the desk, and afterwards a form of prayer, perhaps used by the preacher in the pulpit, of his own composure, before he begins his sermon. Go into another congregation, and prayer is performed without either sort of form,—and perhaps the difference in this is not so great. It may be the conformist uses no preconceived form of his own, and the nonconformist may. Both instruct the people out of the same holy book of God's word. Now, let us shew ourselves men, and manly Christians, not swayed by trifles and little things, as children, by this, or that dress, or mode, or form, of our religion, which may, perhaps, please some the more for its real indecency. But know that if, while we continue picqueering* about forms, the life be lost, and we come to bear the character of that church, "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead," we may ere long (after all the wonders God hath

* Skirmishing.

wrought for us) expect to hear of our candlesticks being removed, and that our sun shall go down at noon-day.

"The true serious spirit and power of religion and godliness will let no man act against his conscience, or his rule understood, but will oblige him in all acts of worship to keep close to Gospel prescription, so far as he can discern it. And that, he will find, requires, that in subordination to the Divine glory he seriously design the working out the salvation of his own soul, and, taking the course in order thereto, put himself under such a ministry, and such a way of using God's ordinances, as he finds most profitable, and conducing to that great end, and that doth his soul most real good. If you are religious, or of this or that mode or way of religion, to serve a carnal design for yourself or your party, not to serve your soul, you commit the most detestable sacrilege, and alienate the most sacred thing in the world, religion, from its true end, which will not only lose that end, but infer a heavy vengeance. Yea, and 'tis too possible to transgress dangerously, by preferring that which is less, though never so confidently thought to be divine, before that which is greater, or separately from its end. You greatly

prevaricate if you are more zealously intent to promote Independency than Christianity, Presbytery than Christianity, Prelacy than Christianity, as any of these are the interest of a party, and not being considered in subserviency to the Christian interest, nor designed for promoting the edification and salvation of your own soul. But that being your design, living religion will keep your eye upon your end, and make you steady and constantly true to that and to your rule, without which you can never hope to reach your end."

"You ought most frequently to attend that worship which you find to be most edifying to your own soul; as that should be your more ordinary diet that best agrees with you. And that way, therefore, you must most constantly adhere to which is most grateful and savoury to you, because you cannot so much edify by what you less relish. But your judgment and latitude will well allow you sometimes to frequent the assemblies with which you hold not constant communion. And if it will allow, it will also direct you thereto for a valuable end; as, that you may signify you ordinarily decline them not as no Christians, or their worship as no worship, but as more defective and less edifying; and that you may maintain love, and

both express and beget a disposition to nearer union. And if our rulers shall judge such intercourses conducing to so desirable an end, they may perhaps in due time think it reasonable to put things into that state, that ministers of both sorts may be capable of inviting one another occasionally to the brotherly offices of mutual assistance in each others congregations. For which, and all things that tend to make us a happy people, we must wait upon Him in whose hands their hearts are."*

In 1704 appeared "The Layman's Reasons for his joining in *Stated* Communion with a Congregation of Moderate Dissenters. By Matthew Henry." In this paper he remarks, "I am heartily concerned about my soul and my everlasting condition. It is my care and desire to please God, and to work out my salvation. All other interests and concerns are nothing to me in comparison with this. I seriously profess I am afraid of sin, and am solicitous to be found in the way of my duty, and to get all help I can to forward me towards heaven, and fit me for it. Hereunto I can add this further protestation, that through the grace

* See also Howe's Letter on Occasional Conformity, p. 579; Calamy's Life of Baxter, p. 496.

of God I have a catholic charity for all good Christians. I cannot monopolize the church; 'tis narrow enough. I dare not make it narrower. I love a good man, whatever party he belongs to, and him that follows Christ, though he doth not follow with me. He that fears God and works righteousness is accepted of God, and shall be accepted by me.

"My practice is this: I join myself sometimes with the assemblies of the public establishment, if an opportunity offers itself on the week-day; or if I happen on a Lord's-day to be out of the reach of such assemblies as I choose statedly to join with, I freely and cheerfully attend the divine service of the church, knowing nothing in the prayers but what I can heartily say *amen* to, which I choose rather to do than to answer aloud after the minister. And this I do that I may testify my catholic charity, and my communion with and affection to all good Christians, though I be not in every thing of their mind. Hereby, likewise, I endeavour to fulfil all righteousness, and in my place I bear my testimony to that which is of God in the public establishment, wherein I do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice."

Never was there a period when the senti-

ments of these good men deserved greater consideration than in the present day. The spirit of these departed worthies was ever found in Mr. Hill during his long ministerial course, and it is hoped that his hallowed example will influence the minds of many brethren, who differ in non-essentials, cordially and unitedly to "contend for the faith once delivered to the saints."

The long and affectionate intercourse which Mr. Hill maintained with many of his nonconformist brethren greatly attached them to him. The revered names of Bull, Wilks, Burder, Waugh, Sibree, Hughes, and of many others who have finished their course with joy, were dear to him, and also those of many living ministers who still continue to labour in the church. His heart and his pulpit were alike open to them. The interchange of services with evangelical preachers being a favourite subject with Mr. Hill, his views will now be given on that subject.

"A minister, I humbly conceive, should have an uncontroled right over his own pulpit. It is cruel in the extreme not to allow him the assistance of those whose ministrations he believes will be the spiritual advancement of the people of his charge. Let it but be proved

to me, that a man preaches and lives the Gospel, and that he has been blessed with seals to his ministry, I ask by what authority dare any set of Christians reject him, or tie up the hands of any other ministers who choose to give him the right hand of fellowship? But such admission, say some, would be *riding upon the back of all order and decorum.* Happy should I be to ride upon the back of *such* order and decorum till I had ridden them to death: for the more free, and open, and loving, gracious ministers are among themselves, the more will the cause of God be promoted, without the least infringement on any order and decorum they mutually observe, which may be consistent with the word of God.

"What order is broken thereby, but the order of the devil, 'divide et impera,' (divide and rule,) and the order of the pope, which, when translated into modern sectarian Protestant language, stands thus—'*It is against the order of our church?*' Now this is the very doctrine which will support every innovation that the pope, Turk, or devil can invent. And I deliberately say, these are the tricks of hell itself, to divide the church of God upon earth."*

* First Journal, p. 121-2.

Our departed friend frequently exchanged pulpits with members of different denominations, and when he announced the names of such brethren to his congregation, he generally added some kind and catholic observation. He was much attached to his beloved friend Dr. Steinkopff. One morning at Surrey Chapel, after his sermon, he remarked, "I shall not be with you this evening, for I am to preach for dear Dr. Steinkopff at the Savoy, and he will be here. I hope you'll all come; and if you can't understand every word he says, it will do you good to look at him."

Mr. Hill considered the right of private judgment as the natural, unalienable right of all. He remarks, "No state can justly presume to correct any supposed religious errors by its authority, provided the errorists can but give proper security to the state by which they are protected. Such are the chartered privileges of our own land. By this right of private judgment, on the one hand, the members of the Established Church are entitled to enjoy their own privileges without being attacked by the Dissenters; so also the Dissenters are equally at liberty to enjoy their own privileges, without any molestation from the Established

Church. The Dissenter who aims at the demolition of the Church, and the Churchman who attempts the ruin of the Dissenters, are alike persecutors in heart."*

"It is evident from the arguments of Locke, that the state has nothing to do with any person's religion, provided he can give evidence that there is nothing in his religion inimical to the state. The dissenter has nothing to do with the established church; nor has the established church any thing to do with the dissenter. All are at liberty to *persuade*, but no one has a right to *enforce* his arguments by persecution."†

In connexion with these views, Mr. Hill believed, "that all state prosecutions for the sake of religion, were absurd and abominable." At the time he opposed the assessment of

* Apology for Sunday-Schools, p. 29, 30.

"The wishes of all good men are, that the national church, being secured in her worship and emoluments, may not be allowed to force others to her communion, and that all dissenters from it, being secured in their liberty of conscience, may not be permitted to meddle with the riches or power of the national church."—Milton's Tenure of Kings and Magistrates.

† On Parochial Assessments of Chapels, p. 8.

Surrey Chapel for the poor-rates, he remarks, "I have pledged myself, that if ever the parish shall succeed against us, (in making us pay the poor-rates for Surrey Chapel,) the example of the Quakers shall be ours. What a set of constables can seize, of our movable property, they may. While we feel ourselves forbidden to resist force to force, we shall never dare to yield. Though we must submit to be distrained, we never can suffer ourselves to be deprived of a privilege, in which millions are interested equally with ourselves."*

The warm attachment of Mr. Hill to his nonconformist brethren arose from a knowledge of their usefulness. He remarks, "I consider, and lament how much the Gospel is wanting in the established church,—and that if a set of zealous, well-minded people did not act for God, thousands, and tens of thousands, might have been left to perish through lack of knowledge, who are now converted to God through their instrumentality, and are constrained to live to his glory.

"For these my sentiments, no wonder that the bigoted high-churchman has frequently *favoured* me with his sharp reproof; but bigots

* Religious Freedom, p. 51.

are bigots of every party, and it is folly to suppose that any can escape their angry bite, but as you join the party to which any of them belong."*

No one, who is at all acquainted with the success of Rowland Hill, can doubt that it was greatly promoted by his wandering beyond the strict line of the national church. He always felt and acknowledged this himself. Hence he exclaims, "Had I a thousand lives, I trust they would be spent in the Lord's blessed work. I dare not be fettered by human laws, while I am under a Divine command to 'preach the Gospel to every creature,' and 'to spend and be spent for Jesus Christ.' I have been somewhat a sufferer for such conduct; but laws like these, appear to me not better than the statutes of Omri: and I dare not renounce the Lord's *standing* rule to all his ministers, while under the conjoined promise, "I am with you always, even to the end of the world."†

Had Mr. Hill remained strictly within the walls of the church, how few pulpits would have been accessible during the first forty years of his

* Warning to Professors.

† First Journal, p. 51.

successful course! See, then, how the Lord overruled, for good, his violation of episcopal rules. Every respectable dissenting pulpit was freely opened to him, throughout the united kingdoms; and such was the lovely liberality of the nonconformists, that they received him *as a churchman* into their congregations. Mr. Hill, however, never abused the confidence placed in him by his brethren, though he would sometimes drop a broad hint on the subject of the bigotry that was to be found in most places. One little incident he would sometimes allude to: "I once conversed with a man in the country, and asked him if there were any good people in his town. His reply displayed the narrowness of his spirit. 'O, Sir, we are most of us dissenters born.' I could not help warmly replying, 'Do not tell me about being dissenters born, but about dissenters born again."

On another occasion he remarked, "No matter what the name of the boat is that ferries over the poor benighted sinner into the land of Gospel light and liberty, provided the blessed work be but accomplished."

It was always a source of much pleasure to Mr. Hill to occupy pulpits in the established church. He frequently had this gratification

during his tours for the Missionary Society. On such occasions he would never preach for the dissenting minister in the same town, since he feared that by so doing he might bring his clerical friend into difficulties. He longed for the time to come, when orthodox and respectable ministers, of all denominations, should exchange pulpits, and so prove that though worshipping in different folds, they were all members of the household of faith, who would eventually unite in the pure service of "the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven."

CHAP. XV.

MR. HILL'S PUBLICATIONS.

REMARKS ON MR. HILL'S PUBLICATIONS—HIS SERMONS—REPLY TO WESLEY—SERMONS AT SURREY CHAPEL—THE VILLAGE DIALOGUES—THEIR USEFULNESS—THE AUTHOR'S OWN REVIEW OF THE WORK—ORIGINAL LETTER—HIS TOURS—DEFENCE OF SUNDAY-SCHOOLS—SALE OF CURACIES—WARNING TO PROFESSORS—TREATISE ON COW-POCK INOCULATION—PAMPHLETS IN SUPPORT OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, AND IN OPPOSITION TO PAROCHIAL ASSESSMENTS ON PLACES OF WORSHIP—HYMNS BY MR. HILL—CONTRIBUTIONS TO ALBUMS—A HINT TO GALLERY SINGERS—REMARKS ON SINGING—ANECDOTES—ORATORIOS—ORIGINAL LETTER FROM REV. JOHN BERRIDGE ON MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENTS—MR. HILL'S OPINIONS THEREON.

THE writings of Mr. Hill were numerous, though several of them are not of permanent interest. His first effort from the press was in 1773, when he printed "The Gospel Message," which has been noticed in Chapter III. of this memoir. In 1776 his "Token of Respect to the Memory of the Rev. James Rouquet" appeared. Mr. Hill was then chaplain to the Countess of Chesterfield. This sermon breathes the warmest affection for the memory of his departed friend, and contains several beautiful references to the scenes of domestic life, and is a good specimen of the tenderness which often characterized his sermons.

In 1777 Mr. Hill published "A full Answer to the Rev. J. Wesley's Remarks upon a late Pamphlet published in Defence of the Characters of the Rev. Mr. Whitefield and others." The spirit of the pamphlet was like the times in which it appeared, when "Ephraim vexed Judah, and Judah Ephraim." The members of the household of faith were for a season divided, and the enemies of the cross cried out "Aha, aha!—so would we have it."

The biographer of Wesley, when reviewing the unhappy conflict between these excellent men, tells his reader, that "amidst the scurrilities and vulgar abuse of Mr. Toplady, otherwise an able writer and a man of learning, and the coarse virulence or buffoonery of the Hills and Berridge, it is refreshing to remark in the writings of 'the saintly Fletcher' so fine a union of strength and meekness; an edge so keen, and yet so smooth; and a heart kept in such perfect charity with his assailants, and so intent upon establishing truth, not for victory but for salvation."*

There was too little charity, it is to be feared, in the hearts of *all* the controversialists. If the friend of Wesley complains of the titles given to

* Watson's Life of Wesley, p. 260.

their pamphlets by the Calvinistic brethren,— "an old fox tarred and feathered;" "the serpent and the fox;" "Pope John," &c.; yet, on the other hand, the Arminian brethren, with all their meekness, did not employ the mildest epithets. Hence, in their works we find the following descriptions given of their Calvinistic opponents: "devil's factors—children of the old roaring hellish murderer, who believe his lies—advocates for sin—witnesses for the father of lies—blasphemers—Satan-sent preachers—devils—liars—fiends." These and similar expressions the writer cannot consider to be the "models of temper, logical and calm, which Mr. John Wesley felt it to be his duty to use in bringing the aggressors to a due sense of their own misdoings."*

Long before the close of life, Mr. Hill deeply regretted the unchristian bitterness which had been displayed in religious controversy. The writer has heard him confess, that all parties went too far, and forgot that "speaking the truth *in love*" was the rule which should ever be observed by the Christian. The parties have at length laid down the arms of their unholy strife, and are now together before the throne of the Lamb.

* Watson's Life of Wesley, p. 261.

It is due to the memory of Mr. Hill to give the following explanation, "That being absent from home when his first pamphlet against Mr. Wesley was printed, some of the severest terms, which *he never saw* till he read them in print, were introduced by a friend. He immediately sent to London to rectify some of those mistakes, but the impression was sold off."

Soon after this controversial essay, followed the first sermon preached by Mr. Hill at Surrey Chapel, entitled "Christ Crucified," which contains an interesting view of the leading truths of the Gospel, and well deserves an attentive perusal. His Expostulatory Letter to the Rev. W. D. Tattersall, the vicar of Wotton-under-edge, against theatrical entertainments, exposes very powerfully their evil tendency. He very ingeniously introduces to his clerical antagonist, Rousseau, the French infidel, who objected on moral grounds to such entertainments, and considered them most pernicious to young people.

In 1794 the sermon which Mr. Hill preached at Surrey Chapel on the formation of the London Missionary Society was published, entitled "Glorious Displays of Gospel Grace." It contains some references to the labours of his loved friend Whitefield, and several inimitable

sketches of the character of a true missionary, which have been noticed in Chapter IX. This sermon appears to have been prepared with more than usual care.

In 1801 "The Village Dialogues" made their appearance in succeeding numbers of the Evangelical Magazine. This is unquestionably the most important work he published. "Most of the Dialogues passed under the eye of the late invaluable Mr. Ambrose Serle, who kindly undertook upon him the office of final editor of the press." Mr. Hill's original intention was to publish a series of tracts for village circulation, and he therefore offered these little productions to the Religious Tract Society. A few numbers were published by that institution, but the remarks freely made on the unworthy ministers of different denominations led the committee to discontinue their publication, as likely to interfere with their neutral principles. The work displays much genius, and clearly shows how closely Mr. Hill observed man in all classes of society. He could hold intercourse with the most elevated person, and he enjoyed conversation with the simple-hearted but pious rustic. The reader of this work can never forget the cottage piety of good Thomas Newman, the

clerk of the parish, nor the holy devotedness of Mr. Lovegood, its beloved clergyman. The smile has often been excited by poor Thomas's fears, that if the lord-chancellor were to hear what a wonderful man his minister was, the king would soon make him the lord archbishop of Canterbury;* and the tear has often been dropped, when reading the account of young Henry Littleworth's return to his father's house. Many of the characters are sketched with great effect, though sometimes there is a degree of sarcasm which may to some appear to be too severe. His motives were good, and in all things he desired the advancement of his Master's cause. Most ardently did he love the holy man of God who preached the Gospel in sincerity and truth, while his very soul abhorred the hireling who went into the priest's office for a morsel of bread. This will account for the great severity of many of his remarks.

The portraits contained in this work were evidently taken from life. The author's eye was fixed on known characters, and hence the genuine feeling which he sometimes displayed. On one occasion, the present writer was with the venerable man, when he referred to one of his

* Village Dialogues, vol. i. p. 151, 26th ed.

sketches: "There, Sir," said he, "that great booby," pointing to a learned doctor who was present, "could not help weeping when he read it." The learned doctor beautifully replied, "And you, Sir, reminded me of one of the ancient masters of eloquence, who was so enraptured with the beauty of a character he had sketched, that for a season he could scarcely believe that it was not a reality." The simple painting of nature, without artificial colouring, always produces a pleasing and deep impression upon the mind.

Mr. Hill's views of all the essential doctrines can be clearly gathered from these dialogues, and the work contains some of the most clear and unanswerable remarks to be found in any writer on the Socinian and Antinomian errors. The lovely and catholic spirit he always displayed towards all good men are here clearly discernible. On this subject he observes, "One set of critics I shall entirely disregard; and as in no one instance have I shown any favour towards them, so shall I expect none in return. I mean the bigots of every party. And while they are so ignorant of their own spirit as to sanction their sectarian principles, by masking their evils under the mild appellations of order,

regularity, consistency, principle, discipline, steadiness, &c., it would be in vain, were I so inclined, to attack them in return. But I forbear to enter into a controversy with those who make the sacrament the exclusive criterion of any sect to which they belong; so contrary to the mind of Christ, and to the nature of that ordinance, in which all his living members are so solemnly directed to look upon themselves as one in him."*

The author concludes the first edition of the Dialogues by becoming his own reviewer, (not to say biographer) and anticipates the sentiments of the public in the following manner:—

"'His Mr. Lovegood is neither a bigoted churchman, nor a friend to stiff dissenters; he is neither one thing nor another; and for this, the rigid professor, on both sides of the question, will give it the author on both sides of his ears.' This, however, will be to him nothing more than the old thing over again.

"'He has lashed, say some, the regular clergy with the most contemptuous severity.' Not the *regular* clergy. Look at their names and characters, and say, for the credit of the

* Preface to Village Dialogues, p. 7. 26th ed.

church, are these the regular clergy? The regular clergy he has treated with respect.

"'A wicked wretch! he hates the church, and wants to overturn it.' If it be not overturned by the above-mentioned regular clergy, regularly wicked, it will never be overturned by him. Indeed! indeed! he loves the church, and wishes for its reformation.

"'But we are sure he hates bitterly the state; and Mr. Spiteful and his comrades will prove the fact.' When he and his adherents* leave off abusing the government, under which they are protected themselves, they will then be left at liberty to make good their mad and wanton charges against others as fast as they can.

"'He is at times much too jocular.' How was the poor author to act under this charge? Some have privately advised a graver style: others have said, 'Let every man appear in his own dress.' He only begs, that his kind critics would bear with him, for if at one time he has been too jocular, at another time he has been too dull.

"'He has been holding up the doctrine of

* The Anti-Jacobin Reviewers.

faith without works?' Strange assertion! let the reader put on his spectacles, for his sight cannot be clear, and read again; and then see if the whole design of the book be not to prove that real Christianity inspires holiness to God, devotedness to his glory, and universal benevolence towards all mankind. 'But he is certainly an advocate for the old free-grace notions of the reformers.' Yes, and let our modern reformers of the doctrine of the Reformation prove that they have done more against all the wickedness existing in this day, than those great men of God did in their day against Popery and its concomitant evils, and the point is given up.

" 'But what will that terrible literary phalanx, the reviewers, say?' Oh, that matter is easily settled; they, like the wise men of Gotham, tell the world, even by the title-page of their books, under whose service they have registered their brains and pens; the man who minds them (I speak of them as a body) proves he has no mind of his own: and the greatest literary amusement a man can have, if he have but time, is to read their most curious contradictions of each other. It appears, that a certain set of these reviewers has already discovered,

that the writer of these Dialogues is both a Solomon and a fool. If, however, he may be permitted to speak for himself, he has been writing for no party—he wishes matters to stand as they are—he is for the existence of an establishment, together with a free toleration to all dissenters, under the protection of the most excellent constitution on which our British government is framed. He is for no revolutions; as, whatever corruptions may defile us, an excellent platform for reformation is always before us.

"May that blessing which is from above, be upon every reader, that whatever has been represented that is evil, may be detested and rejected: so, on the contrary, may all that has been exhibited, which is lovely, honest, and of good report, be the abundant portion of every heart!"

This excellent work passed through twenty-six editions in the life-time of the venerable author, and he had repeated testimonies that God had been pleased to bless it; although, as an author, he was not enriched by his literary labours. On this subject he wrote the following letter to a clerical friend:—

"London, March 3, 1830.

"My dear Sir,

"I send you, according to your request, another set of the 'Village Dialogues.' They have been for some time in the booksellers' hands;—while I had them in my own hands, they contrived to get me into debt, and I was glad to get rid of them for £100. After that, by a juggle among themselves, they were again brought to market, and sold for no less than £600. Thus I have lost my books, and the profits of them also, and cannot do what I would with my own. I am sorry for it,—as, far beyond my expectation, it has proved a useful publication to many.

"Yours affectionately,

"R. HILL."

After the publication of these excellent Dialogues, through which the beloved author, "though dead yet speaketh," several pamphlets appeared, containing the particulars of his first and second tours in Scotland, and his controversies with Dr. Jamieson, the titles of which will be seen in the Appendix. It is not necessary to dwell on these productions, particularly as they have been frequently referred to in

the preceding memoir. These works are not always written in the spirit of meekness, but the peculiar times in which they appeared will partly account for the severity of their style.

The "Apology for Sunday Schools," containing replies to the charges raised against those useful institutions by the Bishop of Rochester, gives most enlightened views of the importance of education, and exposes in a masterly manner, the weak and unsupported statements of his right reverend opponent. This sermon, and the one preached before the volunteers in 1803, are two of his best compositions: they contain some very powerful passages, and are well worthy of perusal.

The "Spiritual Characteristics," represented in an account of a most curious sale of curates by public auction, who were to be disposed of in consequence of the "Clergy Residence Act," were published in 1803, and our venerable friend signed himself, "An Old Observer." This work contained so many severe and caustic remarks against the irreligious and inconsistent ministers of the established church, —that it excited very powerful feelings against the writer. It has been correctly stated, that

Mr. Hill regretted the publication of this work, and therefore did not personally sanction its republication. The Rev. J. Ball, in his "Animadversions on a late Anonymous Pamphlet," entitled, "An Admonitory Epistle to the Rev. Rowland Hill, A. M." remarks, at page 9, "As you profess to have been his friend till the *second* edition of the 'Spiritual Characteristics' made its appearance, let me ask, if your friendship led you to inquire, at the proper sources of information, whether Mr. Hill had any concern in it? Had you made such inquiries, you would have ascertained that he had no concern in it whatever, and that he had not seen a single page of it. And yet, without knowing, and without taking the trouble to inquire into the real state of the case, you have had the effrontery to declare that 'he has *obtruded* a second edition on the public.'" The opposition raised against the work "promoted the sale of the book in a most extraordinary degree;"* and whatever may have been the general opinion concerning the propriety of issuing the work, yet "it discovered much originality of genius, and knowledge of mankind."

* Ball's Animadversions, p. 24.

Although Mr. Hill never sanctioned a second edition of the work, yet the offence he gave to "the higher powers" was never forgiven. He was excluded from the churches, where he had been accustomed to preach. Even the pious and amiable Bishop Porteus felt it his duty to prevent his occupying the pulpits in his diocese. These results were most painful to Mr. Hill, and led him to regret the publication of the book.*

In 1806, Mr. Hill published his "Warning to Professors," which contains many useful admonitions. This work brought the excellent writer into collision with the reviewers of the day, who complained, and not without reason, of the "sarcastic remarks contained in the work, against some of the dissenting churches, which, for the purpose of regularity and discipline, make use of what is termed a church-book."† In the third edition of this useful work, Mr. Hill replied to his reviewers, and assured them "that against no body of

* It is much to be deplored that a new edition of this work was published immediately after the author's death.

† Evangelical Magazine, 1805.

dissenters did he cast the most distant reflection, whether Independents, Presbyterians, Baptists, or any other; but as their restrictive rules shut out, even from occasional communion with any body of Christians but their own; nor against any of their church rules, or church books, did he mean to urge the least objection, only as the principles of brotherly love and unity were violated thereby."

In 1806, Mr. Hill sent out an excellent pamphlet, vindicating and recommending cow-pock inoculation, which had an extensive circulation, and removed the prejudices of many persons against this useful discovery. A full reference to this subject is made in Chapter VIII. of this memoir.

In addition to the works which have been noticed, Mr. Hill prepared several small volumes for the young, entitled, "Divine Hymns for Children;" "Instruction for Children, or, a Token of Love for the Rising Generation;" and a Catechism, entitled, "The Christian Dispensation;" which display much simplicity, and a tender regard for the spiritual interests of the juvenile reader. He loved his Divine Redeemer, and was not

unmindful of the command delivered by him to Peter, "Feed my lambs."

After these, he published several pamphlets on religious freedom, in consequence of the attempts to assess Surrey Chapel for poor-rates.

Two small tracts, entitled, "Four Dialogues in Prison," and "Thomas Steady and John Wild," have had an extensive and useful circulation.

In addition to the remarks which have been made on the prose works of Mr. Hill, his claims as a poet must not be overlooked. Not that any one will venture to seek for him a place among the distinguished bards of our country, but still he has left behind him several beautiful specimens of Christian psalmody, which will always be favourite pieces with the children of God. In the early part of life, Mr. Hill enjoyed the friendship of Cowper the poet, and several of his hymns were reviewed and retouched by that inimitable writer.* In the Surrey Chapel collection there are several of his productions.

* See Preface to "Hymns for Children," p. 5.

His beautiful hymn on the promised rest, is generally known and admired.

Dear Friend of friendless sinners, hear,
And magnify thy grace divine;
Pardon a worm that would draw near,
That would his heart to thee resign:
A worm, by self and sin opprest,
That pants to reach thy promised rest.

With holy fear and reverent love,
I long to lie beneath thy throne:
I long in thee to live and move,
And charge myself on thee alone:
Teach me to lean upon thy breast,
To find in thee the promised rest.

Thou say'st thou wilt thy servants keep
In perfect peace, whose minds shall be,
Like new-born babes or helpless sheep,
Completely stay'd, dear Lord, on thee:
How calm their state, how truly blest,
Who trust on thee, the promis'd rest.

Take me, my Saviour, as thine own,
And vindicate my righteous cause;
Be thou my portion, Lord, alone,
And bend me to obey thy laws:
In thy dear arms of love caress'd,
Give me to find thy promis'd rest.

Bid the tempestuous rage of sin,
With all its wrathful fury, die;
Let the Redeemer dwell within,
And turn my sorrows into joy;
Oh may my heart, by thee possess'd,
Know thee to be my promis'd rest.

No one acquainted with Mr. Hill can read this hymn, without seeing before him the image of the writer in his happiest moments, when his mind was sweetly and graciously subdued by the power of the Divine Spirit. If I were asked for a description of Mr. Hill when "it was well with him," I should just read this short composition. It possesses the pathos of the excellent man, when he left the footstool of mercy, and immediately ascended the sacred desk.

The following lines are a beautiful comment on Rev. vii. 13. "What are these which are arrayed in white robes?" &c.

Q. Exalted high, at God's right hand,
Nearer the throne than cherubs stand,
With glory crown'd in white array,
My wondering soul says, Who are they?

A. These are the saints, belov'd of God,
Wash'd are their robes in Jesu's blood;
More spotless than the purest white,
They shine in uncreated light.

Q. Brighter than angels, lo, they shine,
Their glories great, and all divine;
Tell me their origin, and say,
Their order what, and whence came they?

A. Through tribulation great they came,
They bore the cross, and scorned the shame;
Within the living temple blest,
In God they dwell, and on him rest.

Q. And does the cross thus prove their gain?
And shall they thus for ever reign,
Seated on sapphire thrones, to praise
The wonders of redeeming grace?

A. Hunger they ne'er shall feel again,
Nor burning thirst shall they sustain;
To wells of living waters led,
By God, the Lamb, for ever fed.

Q. Unknown to mortal ears, they sing
The secret glories of their King;
Tell me the subject of their lays,
And whence their loud exalted praise.

A. Jesus, the Saviour, is their theme,
They sing the wonders of his name;
To him ascribing power and grace,
Dominion and eternal praise.

Amen, they cry to him alone,
Who dares to fill his Father's throne;
They give him glory, and again
Repeat his praise, and say, AMEN.

The two following hymns show Mr. Hill's earnest desire to bind up the broken in heart.

A PASTORAL HYMN.

Sweet peace to the sinner who flies to the Lord,
Who trusts on his grace, and relies on his word!
The Saviour will come from the heavens above,
And gladden his heart with the smiles of his love.

How rich is his mercy! how free is his grace!
Who came from above, to redeem a lost race!
Then, sinner, fall down, and his pardon implore,
His favour receive, and his mercy adore.

His heart was so tender,—all praise to his name,
Tho' cover'd with filth, yet a Magdalen came;
And others as vile as Manasseh could be;
Yet all have been sav'd by his death on the tree.

Then why should poor sinners think hard of the Lord?
To him may they fly, and believe on his word;
The smoke of the flax he will raise to a flame;
The reed nearly broken, his strength shall proclaim.

Adored be our Saviour, our Shepherd, and Rock,
Who tenderly guards the poor lambs of his flock!
Who screens from the heat of the clear sultry gleam,
And leads by the banks of the soft running stream.

No terrible tempest shall ever annoy
The peaceful abode which we there shall enjoy!
While basking beneath the bright beams of his love,
We wait to be call'd to the regions above.

A Song in Adversity.

Thy suff'ring disciples, dear Saviour, draw nigh,
And under thy cross on thy mercy rely;
Supported by thee, they can banish all pain:
Disciples of Jesus shall never complain.

Should the sword of thy judgments go forth thro' the land,
While the stroke, we confess, would be just, at thine hand;
We'll sing of thy mercy again and again:
Disciples of Jesus shall never complain.

Should the arrows of sickness and death fly abroad,
Each arrow, we own, would be just from our God:
In humble submission the lot we'll sustain:
Disciples of Jesus shall never complain.

Should blasting and sickness in judgment destroy
The corn and the wine we in mercy enjoy;
No losses shall grieve us; e'en death shall be gain:
Disciples of Jesus shall never complain.

Should the Lord by a murrain the cattle destroy,
No anxious disgust our minds should annoy;
Should he deluge our harvest with tempest and rain,
Disciples of Jesus shall never complain.

Should an Isaac as lovely as Abra'm possest,
Or the wife of my bosom, be torn from my breast,
'Twas the Lord that both gave, and demanded again;
Disciples of Jesus shall never complain.

In the following letter, Mr. Hill refers to Mr. Cowper's kind services in revising his hymns. It contains also a specimen of the writer's humorous style.

"My dear Brother Bull,

"At last the famous publication is out—Cowper, Bull, Hill, & Co., 'parturiunt montes, nascitur,' &c.: and now the paper is so paltry, the pointing so bad, and the typographical blunders so capital, that I have not ventured to advertise them. My printer is a poor man, and it is charity to employ him, but he's the biggest blunderer in all the world, myself not excepted. I intend, if I can, not to advertise till the next edition, and that shall be more correct. Mr. Cowper will find almost all his judicious amendments strictly attended to; the omissions are so small, that I think he himself would

judge them scarce worth apology. I think you know them all. I have mentioned the corrector's name in the preface, just as you have directed. I mean to defer the other publication for a few weeks longer, till I see how this takes with the public. But as I hope to see you soon in town, I shall be able to judge better about the business, and have things in sufficient forwardness for your kind corrections. The hymn-books you receive with this you have already more than paid for by your friendly assistance. The half-dozen, more decently bound, are for Mr. Cowper; will you send them to him the first opportunity. Madame Wallis travels in the same bundle; when you have had enough of her, you will not forget to return her—too good to be parted with for a trifle—charming poetess, the best in her way that ever wrote. You are to come to London on Good Friday; this intelligence I received at Clapham, and I told Mr. Thornton that I should ask you to come to our house on good Thursday; and that if you preached a good sermon, I would send you on the Good Friday afternoon to good Mr. Thornton's, with a good number of thanks for your good services; my good wife also promises you a good supper, a good pipe, and a

good bed, provided you give us a little notice that we are to expect your good company: so, wishing you a good night, as it is a good while past 11 o'clock,

"I remain, though after a poor rate,
"Your good friend and servant,
"R. HILL."

"Friday Eve.
"To the Rev. W. Bull, Newport Pagnel."

Until the close of life, Mr. Hill was accustomed to stir up his poetic muse. In 1830, when eighty-six years of age, on being requested to write a few lines in the album of a young friend, he inserted the following sweet comment on his favourite verse in Phil. iv. 8, "Whatsoever things are true," &c.

As constellations bright and clear
Adorn the night till day appear;
So these bright graces, all divine,
Throughout the soul with lustre shine.

Christ loves his church, and she shall find
Herself adorned with his own mind;
Yes, his dear meek and lowly heart
To every bride he will impart.

The first, the leading grace of love,
Comes like an angel from above;
No hateful feelings now can dare
Insult the soul, for love is there.

A train of milder graces wait
To decorate her heavenly state,
Perfumed with odours, drest in white,
Shining in robes divinely bright.

How kind, how gentle, and how mild,
How holy, harmless, undefiled,
How bright, dear Lord, thy saints shall shine,
When drest in graces so divine.

The following was written in a lady's album in 1827.

"Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."—1 John ii. 12.

Madam Bubble cries out, Come purchase my toys,
Come to vanity fair, and partake of my joys;
No more shall dull care make us gloomy and sad,
We'll live as we like, and be merry and glad.

What a merciful change, when a heavenly birth
Subdues in our hearts this madness of mirth,
Directs us to walk in the fear of our God,
And peacefully travel the heavenly road!

Madam Bubble, begone, as an infamous cheat,
Thy speeches are lies, and thy traffic deceit;
Madam Bubble, begone; no allurements of thine
Shall check my pursuit after blessings divine.

The last time Mr. Hill supplied the pulpit at Wotton-under-edge, his mind was grieved by some circumstances connected with the persons who formed the choir. He felt that no one whose moral character was not unspotted from the world, should be allowed to lead the holy praises of God. On this occasion he dictated the following lines, which contain marks of the writer's peculiar talent.

A HINT TO ALL GALLERY SINGERS.

Wherever the cap fits, let them wear it.

In solemn ranks, behold, we stand
Selected as a choral band,
While o'er our tuneful notes we glide,
Only to GRATIFY our pride.
But how impossible to sing
The praise of our most Holy King,
Till hearts are tuned by grace divine
To celebrate such love as thine.
And which, of all the choir, can say,
We've lips to praise, and hearts to pray?

But how can ever prayer be found
Where sin and wickedness abound?
And how disgraced the cause of God
While such can sing Christ's cleansing blood,
That bids all hateful sin depart,
When grace divine renews the heart!
What strange hypocrisy and guile
Must that black sinner's heart defile
Who emulates an angel's song
With such a heart and such a tongue!
And, oh! what scandal and offence
Proceed to God's dear cause from thence,
While such with hearts and lips profane
PRETEND to celebrate His name.
Let silence seize that lying tongue
That can presume to lift its song
Before that great heart-searching God,
Whose awful sin-avenging rod
Might send the sinner down to dwell
Amid the darksome shades of hell.
Great God! in mercy yet impart
Thy powerful grace to change the heart;
And make such sinners meet to shine
Where angels chant their songs divine.

On this same subject Mr. Hill remarks, "I am very thankful that my respected congregation at Surrey Chapel, in whose service I have been engaged for nearly half a century, in a spirit of uninterrupted harmony and peace,

have not suffered an exclusive set of singers to monopolize to themselves this delightful part of the service of God. All that can, feel it their duty to stand up, that they may praise God with their powers both of heart and voice; while many have felt their souls thrill with sacred joy at the sound of animating songs of praise; such was the command given when David directed the praises of Israel of old: 'Let the people praise thee, O God; yea, let ALL the people praise thee.' How can we be said to 'speak to ourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs,' when in many places not a voice is heard excepting from the singing gallery?—while it is to be feared, that some of these would find their mouths completely stopped, if none should presume to sing but such as are taught by the Holy Spirit 'to make melody in their hearts unto the Lord.' If such sort of gallery-singers know how to please themselves, yet sure I am that the growing evil will excite no growth of spiritual life or animation in those who wish to have their hearts rightly affected in this part of the public service of God." *

The mind of Mr. Hill was pleasingly excited

* Preface to Psalms and Hymns. 8th edit.

by the powers of music and psalmody. "Charms of these sorts," he remarks, "are from God himself; they soften and soothe the mind, producing a most happy preparatory frame for future good. Many a blessed evidence have I known of this sort: sinners have been first softened by the hymn, and afterwards converted by the sermon."* "Now this act of divine worship is an immediate address to Deity himself; and the posture is ever mentioned as that of *standing*, nay, angels are described as lying *prostrate* in praise. Sitting is a slovenly lazy posture for an act of such high devotion."

Mr. Hill evidently felt much spiritual delight when he heard his own favourite compositions. He had no voice for singing, yet his ear was exquisitely fine and correct. He once attempted to lead off the old hundredth hymn, but he told a friend afterwards, "that he was so frightened at the noise he made, that he never again attempted to pitch a tune." It may be proper to record another little fact connected with Mr. Hill's love of music, his occasional admonitions to his congregation on the subject of singing. He had a great objection to noise when substituted for

* First Journal, p. 176.

harmony. He always considered soft devotional singing its perfection; and would therefore say, "I wish the men would be quiet when the soft parts of the hymn are singing; let them listen to the organ, and they will not so frequently interrupt the harmony." These admonitions were kindly received, excited a smile from the good old men, who sang with all their hearts and voices too, and, for a short time, produced a reformation of manners.

Soon after the erection of Surrey Chapel, the performance of sacred music was sanctioned by its pastor, and also by Sir Richard Hill and other excellent persons. These musical entertainments, however, were strongly condemned by others, among whom were the venerable John Berridge and the Rev. John Newton. The latter endeavoured to expose their sinfulness in his work on the Messiah. The mind of Mr. Hill appears for a season to have been undecided upon the subject, but at length he considered it desirable to discontinue these musical exhibitions. On this point, the following letter from Mr. Berridge to his friend Mr. Newton, contains some very just, though quaint, remarks:—

" Everton, June 14, 1786.

" My dear Brother,

" I have received and read your 'Messiah,' and I thank God for the Sermons, and for the testimony you have borne against oratorios: they seem a growing evil. The public prints give notice that three oratorios are to be performed in Louth church, at the end of this month. The fiddling of scripture in a theatre seems to me a profanation of God's word, making it a mere carnal amusement; and the matter is made worse by bringing oratorios into God's house; they then become a satanical ordinance, and Mr. Hill's grace before and after the musical treat, was, though not intended, a consecration of it. The bringing an oratorio band, an army of pipers and fiddlers into God's house, appears to me a worse profanation than bringing doves into the temple. But the cry is, they were all professors. Perhaps so; and *they* are quickly made by a gallery-ticket and a hymn-book. From Sir Richard's avowed vindication of church oratorios, displayed in two letters to our trustees,* containing twenty quarto pages,

* Trustees of the Tabernacle, London.

it seemed plainly his desire to have annual oratorios in Surrey Chapel; and I could not tell how far Mr. Hill might be influenced by his brother and a large band of fiddlestick professors. Therefore I am not sorry that a stir has been made about the matter, to nip the evil in its bud. But if I had known Mr. Hill's declaration, that no more oratorios should be performed in his chapel, it would have saved me the trouble of writing my letter, which was sent to Mr. Mills, of Moorfields, in answer to a letter from him, and designed for no one else. I am sorry to find you all agree in calling oratorios inexpedient things, and nothing more; whereas, if they are lawful exhibitions for God's house, the devil will soon find a way to make them expedient: for what is more expedient to ease a chapel of its debt than a lawful oratorio? and what more expedient to repair a decayed chapel, or to help to support the minister, than a lawful oratorio? Jesus Christ is Lord of the Sabbath, and Lord of his house, and no one has a right to appoint offices and ordinances but himself. All human inventions are innovations of his authority neither expedient nor lawful."*

* Original MS. letter.

To this subject Mr. Hill appears to refer in the following curious epistle.

"My dear Brother,

"What must you think of my treatment last Tuesday eve, when his majesty's tweedle-dee and tweedle-dum man interrupted our worship, and that after such a serious introduction of singing with an organ, which we enjoyed the Sabbath before. Pride must have its fall, and for the future all the tweedle-dums that kings love, they shall keep among themselves; their fine airs will never do for a Methodist meeting-house, and so farewell to the first and the last of this business.

"Brother Bull, thanks—a thousand thanks for your last visit,—the people sucked in the truth very greedily, which proves that they desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby. Jesus is emphatically the Word. The more he is preached, the more his people are blessed: they that feed on him are delighted with one of our songs,

"Bread of heaven,
Feed me till I want no more."

Self and self-righteousness are the two principal repasts of those that know not God; the

one is carrion, the repast of the world; the other is chaff, the dish of the false professor, but (to the believer) His flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed!

"But I forget the design of my letter. After my Tuesday blunder, Mrs. Hill and I came over to Mr. Neale's in hopes of an interview with you at his house; but, like a nimble Jack, we found you gone, and so we did our very best to patch up our bad behaviour. I rejoice with you that your lovely son is as he is: Jesus gives you this joy; his great sacrifice procured all we ever had, now have, and ever shall have.

Past ten o'clock, eyes half shut, mind marvellously stupid, spirits much exhausted, and candles burning to waste. I shall therefore save the best part of a halfpenny if I finish directly.

"Yours very gratefully and affectionately,

"ROWLAND HILL."

"London, some day, I know not what, in the month of February, and here ends my present knowledge."

Towards the close of life, Mr. Hill occasionally sanctioned the performance of sacred music, for the benefit of the alms-houses he had erected. He, however, strongly objected to any one being

engaged in the service whose moral character was incorrect. On these occasions, his friend Mr. Jacob, Dr. Crotch, and other talented men, engaged in the services. It is, however, just to the memory of Mr. Hill to state, that he most decidedly objected to the appearance of Christians at theatrical oratorios. In closing this chapter, his opinion upon this subject shall be given to the reader.

"The greatest honour which can be put upon the science of music is found in the sacred Scriptures themselves; the joys of heaven being represented to us by those delightful charms, is it fit that such a science should be employed for the celebration of the worst of passions? Oh how must the Christian feel when he discovers the artifice of the enemy of souls thus to snatch that sacred torch from the altar of God's own erecting, to kindle a flame opposite to all the holy designs of Heaven."

CHAP. XVI.

MR. HILL'S LAST YEARS AND DEATH.

THE GOOD MAN'S APPROACH TO THE GRAVE—LOOKING BACK ON LIFE—STERNHOLD'S LINES—MR. HILL'S REMARKS ON DEATH—ORIGINAL LETTER TO A CLERGYMAN IN YORKSHIRE—THE LAST LETTER MR. HILL WROTE WITH HIS OWN HAND—INTERESTING INTERVIEW ON MR. HILL'S LEAVING TOWN IN 1832—SERMON AT DR. FLETCHER'S—THE YOUNG LADY'S RECEPTION—BEAUTIFUL REMARKS IN CLOSING SERMONS—THE REV. JOHN GAMBOLD'S HYMN—MR. HILL'S ANXIETY TO SEE HIS SUCCESSOR AT SURREY CHAPEL—APPLICATIONS TO CLERGYMEN AND DISSENTING MINISTERS—TWO ORIGINAL AND CHARACTERISTIC LETTERS—THE MISSIONARY DEPUTATION—FIRST SERMON IN 1833—ON ASSURANCE—MR. HILL'S RESERVE IN REFERENCE TO HIS PERSONAL FEELINGS—HIS LAST SERMON—HIS LAST ADDRESS—DYING EXPERIENCE, AND DEATH—THE FUNERAL SERVICE—TABLET ERECTED IN SURREY CHAPEL—REMARKS THEREON—DR. BATE'S REMARKS IN BAXTER'S FUNERAL SERMON.

ALL the movements of a good man are interesting as he approaches the termination of his course. His path is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. During the Christian's pilgrimage, his experience may vary; "it may be neither dark nor light, yet at eventide it shall be light."

In the prospect of an eternal state, Mr. Hill's mind "rejoiced with trembling." He was not altogether delivered from the bondage arising from the fear of death, and anticipated the event with the most solemn feelings. After hearing a sermon from the words, "Surely the bitterness of death is passed," he affectionately thanked the preacher, and remarked, "Even the apostle says, 'the last *enemy* that shall be destroyed is death. Yes, he is an *enemy*, but a conquered one to the believer."

"There are some people," he observed, "who often talk about looking back on a well-spent life. I look up to Him who spent his life gloriously to redeem my precious soul; and there alone I dare to look. I thank God who has kept me from the grosser sins of the world, but there is not a prayer more suitable for my dying lips than that of the publican, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.'"

For a considerable period before the close of his ministry, Mr. Hill's mind daily dwelt on his expected change. Like the great apostle, there were seasons when he could say, "I am *ready* to be offered." His sermons often contained beautiful indications of the state of his own mind. When in the valley of deep humiliation,

he would often exclaim, "Oh, I love those lines of old Sternhold—

> "Mercy, good Lord, mercy I ask,
> Mercy's the total sum;
> For mercy, Lord, is all my suit,
> O let thy mercy come."

The following passages are specimens of some of the thoughts which sparkled from the mind of the venerable preacher in the closing years of his ministry.

"I can only look upon death as a dreary curse brought into the world by sin; but when I can look on Christ as my life, then I can stand on the high hills of salvation, where I can sing, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?'"

"Death is at all times an awful calamity, and we cannot rejoice over that which in itself is sent as a curse; but, blessed be God, we can still stand on the Rock of ages, and from thence can look down into the chambers of the grave with serenity."

"'Tis a great mercy to have a soft pillow under our heads in a dying hour; but to enjoy this privilege, remember we must live near to God."

"What a mercy it is to feel Christ as our life while we are in life, that when we come to die we may find his love as a fire within us, warming our souls when the chilling hand of death is upon us."

"We none of us can lie down and die comfortably, but as we are led to say, by spiritual life working in our souls, when death is doing its last office on the body, 'I live—yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.'"

"I would rather die a thousand deaths than that the cause of God should grow cold upon my heart."

Having been invited to occupy the pulpit of a clergyman in Yorkshire, Mr. Hill sent the following reply to the invitation. The letter displays the humble state of his mind at the close of life.

"London, March 3d, 1830.

"My dear Sir,

"You invite me kindly to preach in your church; but how can an old man promise to take such a journey, who is far advanced in the 86th year of his age? However, through mercy, it is in my heart to labour still; though, after all our doings, we have only to lament that we have done so little, and that so defectively. May this

be my last dying petition, 'God be merciful to me a sinner!' I am now interrupted a third time while writing these few hasty lines, and conclude by adding that I am,

"Affectionately your's,

"ROWLAND HILL."

The same spirit of deep humility will be discovered in a letter written to one of the respected managers of the Tabernacle at Bristol, a place ever associated with the most pleasing recollections in the mind of Mr. Hill. This letter was perhaps the *last* which he personally wrote. The calm view which he takes of his past ministerial labours is exceedingly interesting.

"Wotton-under-edge, Aug. 2, 1831.

"My dear Friend,

"Long as I have been enabled to resist the imperious consequences of old age, yet I find at length I must submit, and no wonder—before the conclusion of this month, I shall pass into the 88th year of my age. During this last winter I have been visited with such an inflammation in one of my eyes, that I can scarcely see what I write, nor can I read the plainest printed chapter in the Bible but with difficulty,

unless by a previous recollection of its contents; add to this, an injury done to the shin-bone during the missionary week has greatly crippled me, while a small open wound still continues to demand attention and care. I am at length compelled to have a young friend with me to attend to the short services belonging to this place alone, while a few efforts occasionally, to serve some of the smaller congregations in the vicinage, seems to be the utmost my exhausted strength will admit. After this, you will naturally expect me to add, that an autumnal visit to Bristol *cannot* be expected from me, as I now feel it cannot be accomplished by me. I now feel that I cannot do the things that I would, and it grieves me that I must at length give up; and while I am obliged to cease from what is called labour, may I wait with holy patience for my eternal rest in Christ. That day, with me, I am now sure, is very near at hand. That gospel which I have preached I may say many thousands of times to others, is now the only solid resting-place of my soul: though in this letter I scarcely see what I write, yet in this I feel what I write. Though I don't lament over what I have preached, yet I greatly lament that I have not preached the same truths with more spirituality, fervour, and

devotedness of heart. Though I cannot charge myself as having been a lazy *drone*, yet, as a busy bee, oh! that I had been better taught how to collect the sacred honey from those hills from whence all our hopes of salvation come.

"Though while I write I scarcely see what I write, yet one word shall further be written, as flowing from the heart of

"Your's, very affectionately,

"ROWLAND HILL.

"Love to your family and friends."

W. D. Wills, Esq.

It may not be improper here to introduce a letter which Mr. Hill wrote to an aged and beloved ministerial brother:—

"My dear old Friend and Brother,

"What an honour to be enabled to bring forth fruit in old age: the people tell me you were highly favoured with this token for good during your last summer's visit at Surrey Chapel,—they say that your preaching was not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. This makes them cry out for another taste of the same sort,—and in obedience to their wishes I write to inform you, that we shall have a

vacancy to fill up, from after the four first Sabbaths in July, till after the last in August. Say how much of that time you can spare for us,—the more of it the better. Nothing but a heavenly union with our sacred Head, Christ Jesus, can avail to keep up the power of religion upon the heart. How little the world can know of that blessed mystery, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God!" Oh, glorious death! Oh, glorious life!—enough to make us alive even in the very jaws of death. May you be enabled to tell of this great salvation in a more abundant manner in your declining years, with more animation and holy warmth than ever you enjoyed in your youthful days.

"Your ever affectionate Brother,

"R. HILL."

One of the most interesting scenes the writer ever witnessed in connection with Mr. Hill, and which strikingly displayed the peculiarities of his mind, was on the day he left London for his country residence in 1832. The rapid manner in which he passed from the "grave to the gay" was a strong indication of the strong excitement he felt. On the Sabbath evening, I had taken

my leave of him, not expecting to see him again. He sent for me in the morning, and requested me to attend to some small commissions. I was with him a few minutes before he left the chapel-house. Having finished his lunch, he called out, "Charles, are the horses ready?" "Not quite, Sir." "Horses are good things, Sir," he remarked, "I had one that carried me many miles to preach the gospel; he was a kind creature; I remember I taught him to dance, and he managed it very well indeed. Oh! me—I am now leaving this place, never, perhaps, to see it again. Oh! 'tis a solemn thought. Charles, where is the old cat? I've not seen him for a long time; he used to keep my feet warm in the winter, and curl his tail round my legs. How does Doctor —— go on? I don't much like that man. There's something odd about him, and his temper is queer. Charles, are the horses ready?" "Nearly so, Sir." "I had a cow once at Wootton, and she was a great favourite; I tried to teach her to dance, but, poor thing! she made a sad out of it. I once permitted her to give me a ride, but I had no sooner got on her back, than away she went, quite delighted with her load, but I was soon upset; so I never gave her another treat. Pray, Sir, how is the

Trinitarian Bible Society going on? Trinitarian, too! what right have they to assume that title? Our Bibles are as Trinitarian as theirs." At this moment the servant entered and said, "The horses are ready, Sir." "Oh! dear, *must* I go?" He rose with difficulty from his chair. He walked to the door, and, turning back, he sighed, and gave a searching look round the room, and then, in a subdued tone, with his eyes raised, he exclaimed, "Oh! 'tis a solemn thought—I am not likely to see this place again." He paused, and in a voice little louder than a whisper, added, "But what a mercy to have lived here fifty years, and by heavenly grace to have been kept unspotted from the world!" He then said to his attendant, "I'll go into the kitchen, and see the servants." He slowly descended the steps, where he found them all waiting to bid him farewell. Standing in the centre of the kitchen with deeply affected feelings, he said, "You'll not see your old master again." All present were in tears. Just at this moment the old cat made his appearance. "You nasty old creature," said Mr. Hill, so you have just come to say mew, mew, before I go: where have you been? ah! you may mew! let me stroke his back, Daniel." The cat was caught, and the

good man having patted poor puss several times, ordered him to be set at liberty, when off he ran, as if pleased that he had so successfully made his peace with his master. Mr. Hill then proceeded to the coach-yard. He looked for a second or two with deep interest at the chapel. "There I have preached for fifty years; but my work is done." He got into his carriage, and then exclaimed, as he drew up the window-blind, "Farewell, till bodies meet to part no more."

The effect of this scene can scarcely be conceived. I was relieved by tears as the carriage disappeared, and then thought that our next meeting would probably be at the judgment-seat of Christ.

The venerable man was spared once more to return to London. From his increasing feebleness it was evident that "the time of his departure was at hand." The last time he preached for his friend, Dr. Fletcher, at Stepney, it was with extreme difficulty he reached the chapel. In the vestry it was doubtful whether or not he could preach. A friend read the Scriptures and prayed, for him. After a considerable effort he ascended the pulpit, and the sight of a crowded congregation revived his spirits. The congregation sang Dr. Watts's 71st psalm, 3d part—

" Wilt thou forsake my hoary hairs,
And leave my fainting heart?
Who shall sustain my sinking years,
If God, my strength, depart?

" Let me thy power and truth proclaim
To the surviving age;
And leave a savour of thy name,
When I shall quit this stage.

" The land of silence and of death
Attends my next remove;
O may these poor remains of breath
Teach the wide world thy love!"

The effect of the hymn was exceedingly interesting, under the peculiar circumstances of the preacher. Mr. Hill preached a short sermon from his favourite text in 1 Cor. xv. 58, which evidently did him good. After the service, many of the people were anxious to take a last farewell. A young lady, who seemed to approach him with the grateful feelings of a convert, requested the favour of taking his hand: the good man was not in one of his happy moments, for nature was exhausted. He tardily complied with the request, and then dryly remarked, "I hope that will last you, ma'am, for seven years."

At Surrey Chapel he was obliged to sit while preaching, for a considerable time before his death. His sight failing him, his text was written out in large text-hand, which he was able to decipher with the assistance of extra glasses. At seasons there were beautiful thoughts in his sermons. The following were uttered in his 88th year:—

"I may as well try to pluck the stars from the firmament with this little arm of mine, as to plant one of the graces of the Spirit in my heart by any power of my own."

"When God created the world, he had only to say, 'Let there be light, and there was light;' but when he has to convert a soul, all the powers of sin and hell are engaged against him."

"The grace of evangelical repentance does not break the heart, and leave every bit of the broken parts still stone; but it melts the heart, and changes every principle of it. If you break a flint stone, every portion of the stone is still flint; but if you melt it in the fire, every particle of it becomes changed. So it is with the heart of man: the Lord does not break it; but by the fire of Divine love he gloriously changes the heart, and it becomes entirely new."

"No engraver, however eminent, can engrave a good image or likeness upon a clumsy or coarse material, not capable of receiving the fine touches of his art: so, while there is nothing within us but these earthly hearts, I could venture to say, *God* cannot engrave his holy image there, unless he gives first of all a better spirit to receive the impression."

Notwithstanding his great debility, it was often difficult to prevail on the aged preacher to seek the repose which nature required; and yet his beautiful remark was, "I never had too much of the seraph, but always too much of the snail." His affectionate people heard him with great kindness; and after he had finished his sermon, they would exclaim, "Dear old gentleman, he has been very sweet this morning. Ah! there's nobody like him, after all!"

As he continued to approach "the house appointed for all living," two subjects alternately occupied his mind—his own death, and his successor in the pulpit. You could seldom call upon him without hearing him repeat the tenth and eleventh verses in the 134th hymn in the Surrey Chapel Collection; a simple and beautiful poem, composed by the late Rev. John

Gambold, A. M., formerly minister of Staunton Harcourt, in Oxfordshire, and afterwards one of the bishops of the United Brethren.

O tell me no more
Of this world's vain store,
The time for such trifles with me now is o'er.

A country I've found,
Where true joys abound,
To dwell I'm determin'd on that happy ground.

The souls that believe
In Paradise live,
And me in that number will Jesus receive.

My soul, don't delay,
He calls thee away;
Rise, follow thy Saviour, and bless the glad day.

No mortal doth know
What He can bestow,
What light, strength, and comfort do after him go.

Lo! onward I move,
And but Christ above,
None guesses how wondrous my journey will prove.

Great spoils I shall win
From death, hell, and sin;
Midst outward afflictions shall feel Christ within.

Perhaps for his name,
Poor dust as I am,
Some works I shall finish with glad loving aim.

I still (which is best)
Shall in his dear breast,
As in the beginning, find pardon and rest.

And when I'm to die,
Receive me, I'll cry,
For Jesus hath loved me, I cannot tell why.

But this I do find,
We two are so joined
He'll not live in glory, and leave me behind.

Lo! this is the race
I'm running through grace,
Henceforth, till admitted to see my Lord's face.

And now I'm in care
My neighbours may share
These blessings—to seek them will none of you dare?

In bondage, O why,
And death, will you lie,
When one here assures you free grace is so nigh?

For several years before his death, Mr. Hill had constant anxiety of mind to see his successor in the work of the Lord. The old warrior thought he could cheerfully retire from the spiritual conflict, if he could only deliver up his standard to an efficient leader of his people.

On one occasion he mentioned his intention of writing to a clergyman, who had conscientious scruples about remaining in the church.

"Do you know him, Sir; they tell me he's a nice lad." "No, Sir," I replied, "but I understand he has been a neighbour of yours for a considerable time." "A neighbour of mine, Sir, where did he live?" "Within the walls of the King's Bench Prison." "Mercy on us, we must not write to him, however." At this time he confessed a wish that "young Mr. Sidney" could clearly see his way to accept the pulpit," adding, "He must come to us, for we cannot place the chapel under ecclesiastical jurisdiction, — many good dissenters having liberally contributed towards its erection."

The aged pastor was affectionately attached to a deservedly popular and useful preacher in the north of England, and considered him well qualified to be his successor. On this subject he addressed to him the following letter, which is very characteristic of the writer:—

"May 15, 1826.

"My dear Brother,

"You have an application to supply for us when you are in town; and happy shall I be, if you can comply with our request. Now, though I most heartily advise you to continue in your

present sphere, where you are so much needed, —in a city where there is so much darkness and death—yet should any providence direct you to remove, I remind you that the poor old ass, of Surrey Chapel, has now nearly completed the eighty-second year of his age,—and though he continues to trot under his panniers as well as he can, yet after the double duty, as the parsons call it, on the Sabbath, he afterwards hangs his head over his manger, and cannot well partake of his required food. And though it is wicked to be cruel to dumb animals, and though I mean, by the blessing of God, to prove I am not a dumb animal as long as I can speak,—yet it is now high time to begin to cry out for help. There is no place better calculated for the speaker and for the hearers, than Surrey Chapel. The young greyhound will soon discover that, when he gets upon the chase, he need not run so fast, and still catch quite as much game, though at present he cannot help it.

"But, seriously,—This must be esteemed to be a very important station,—and while I am surprised at its continued prosperity, I am happy to say, we do not decline. Oh, that the great Head of the church would allow me

to see and know somewhat of my successor before I die. My lot, through mercy, has been fair, and comfortable, among the kind people I have been called to serve. I bless God for them, and I think any man of liberality, of good temper, and open conduct, would be happy in such a sphere. I hint no more at present, further than that I am,

"Your's very affectionately,

"R. HILL."

"To the Rev. J. Parsons, York."

A passage in this letter refers to a singular description which Mr. Hill had given of a Missionary Deputation, consisting of himself, and his excellent friend to whom he wrote. After returning from the tour, he said to his Surrey Chapel friends, at one of their meetings, "The Directors of the Missionary Society are strange folks, for they actually sent a young Yorkshire greyhound, and an old London ass, to plead their cause. I had hard work, I assure you, to keep up with my companion, but I hobbled after him as hard as I was able."

He also wrote the following letter to the same esteemed friend:—

"Wotton-under-edge, Sept. 15, 1826.

"My very dear Brother,

"I hope you understood me, that I by no means designed to invite you from your present situation at ——; only, if you should ever design a removal from thence, I was anxious to be favoured with information of your design. My opinion perfectly coincides with your own. You are more wanted at —— than in London. I, however, am now very old, past eighty-two. I greatly wish to see my successor before I die. A candid, liberal, warm-hearted, sound-headed, spiritual servant of God, who would rather work himself, than snore, or feast himself to death, in the service of Christ, is the man we want. I have seen enough of some sort of *parsons*, both in and out of the church, to be sick of them. If you should hear of such a true-hearted, faithful servant of the word, how thankful should I be for the information!

"I should be tempted to come down to Bristol, if my old bones were not wanting a little rest. But if I could see you in these parts, as you return, (we are on the road,) it would be a very high gratification to

"Your's very sincerely, "R. HILL."

"To the Rev. James Parsons."

On the subject of a successor, he remarked from the pulpit, "I do long for the time in which I shall see a faithful minister of God more immediately raised up amongst you, who shall be enabled to do the work of an evangelist in an acceptable manner; I want to see a minister who is no sectarian, or party man; one who loves all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; that loves to stand upon that ground which, thank God, I have occupied all the days of my life—neutral ground—neither a stiff churchman, nor a bigoted dissenter; one who is either, or nothing at all; who cares little for outward external matters,—but whose mind is purely occupied within. One thing is needful, and all other things are but idle talking, and vanity."*

"I have served you more than fifty years, and never quarrelled with you except about your sins." The venerable man then, with peculiar energy, exclaimed, "Thanks be to God, thanks be to God, thanks be to God, that peace has been within these walls, and prosperity within our palace. May the spirit of affection ever dwell among you, that you may be another

* Fifteen Sermons on Important Subjects, p. 61.

brood of the true Philadelphian stock, loving one another with pure hearts fervently."

It was not the will of his heavenly Father that his aged servant should see his successor before he died. He was permitted to leave his church in peace, and many prayers have ascended before the throne of God, that the mantle of Elijah may rest upon one who will feed the people with knowledge and understanding.* It was to be regretted that Mr. Hill allowed the matter to depress his mind, but his great love to his people led him to desire to see their future minister.

The first sermon Mr. Hill preached in 1833 contained some affecting allusions to his own mortality. "Many of my friends," he remarked, "have been swept away by the scythe of death since this time twelvemonths, and there is one standing among you who does not expect to see this year out. The days of my pilgrimage must be nearly ended. Oh! it is a beautiful

* Since the above was written, the Rev. James Sherman, late of Reading, has become the successor of Mr. Hill at Surrey Chapel. Mr. S. remarks in his sermon preached on commencing his regular labours there,—that it was the expressed wish of Mr. Hill, that, if it pleased God, he might succeed him.

sight to see the setting sun on a summer day—the rays, though faint, may be clear; so, while the rays of my poor abilities begin to get very feeble, God can still through them impart light and life to your souls."

Until the close of life, Mr. Hill had such a deep sense of his personal unworthiness, and such exalted views of the holiness of God's character, that he seldom found himself on the mount of assurance. He fled to the cross of Christ and there, beholding his great love, rejoiced in hope. His constant song was,

> "We two are so joined,
> He'll not live in glory, and leave me behind."

The experience of Mr. Hill was in perfect harmony with the opinions he often expressed in the pulpit. "Modest words," he remarked, "before God always become us best; strong expressions of personal interest may do for some, but not for all; many sin in speaking too boldly, none in speaking too humbly." He was better pleased with living evidences of an interest in Christ than with a few dying expressions, however interesting they might be to survivors. All a Christian can expect in the

solemn hour of death is the fulfilment of the promise, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." He was fond of repeating in his sermons, the language of a minister, who, on being asked, "How he felt his mind in the prospect of eternity," replied, "There is a sweet communication kept up between the Lord and my soul."

No one who knew Mr. Hill expected that there would be a very full disclosure of his feelings at the close of life. He never liked to talk much about himself. Hence in his last affliction he was free in his remarks to his servants, but rather reserved to his friends. Up to the time he entered the valley of the shadow of death, he was repeating the Scriptures, and making many suitable remarks on them. On the approach of a ministerial friend, he became more cautious and reserved.

The last sermon Mr. Hill delivered was on Sunday, March 31st, from 1 Cor. ii. 7, 8. "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory. Which none of the princes of this world knew, for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord

of glory."* Although exceedingly feeble, he preached for nearly fifty minutes.

The outline of this sermon was preserved and afterwards published by Mr. Weight, who had been assisting Mr. Hill. It resembles a confession of faith at the close of a long ministry, and contains his opinion on the union that should subsist between all Christians, one of his old and favourite themes. "We have often heard," he remarks, "of family likenesses, and that it is somewhat difficult to distinguish between two individuals of the same family. There is also a wonderful likeness among the children of God, and we do wiser and better to look after that than after the paltry sects and modes into which Christianity is now too much divided. There is but one and the same grace belonging to them all. God be praised, all the minor differences which prevail in time, will cease when we are for ever with the Lord."* He refers to the sacramental service of the church of England, and gives his approval of the special days appointed for divine

* "The First and Last Sermon of Rev. Rowland Hill," printed by Page & Sons.

worship. His views of the millennium are clearly stated. He mentions his conversion when a boy at Eton school, and the great success of his early ministry. His final appeal to the sinner is very striking: "How will you escape, if you neglect so great salvation? You say you hope to come to Christ by-and-by. By-and-bys are not with you; you may be struck dead before your by-and-by comes. God be praised, we can say, 'His arm is not shortened that it cannot save;' it is stretched out, even now."

The last address Mr. Hill delivered was to the Sunday-school teachers who were assembled at Surrey Chapel, on Tuesday evening, the 2nd of April, 1833. He was then in a state of extreme debility. He requested Mr. Weight to address the teachers, and promised, if able, afterwards to add a few words. He fulfilled his promise with difficulty,—but when in the sacred desk, he appeared to forget his infirmities. His address was full of excellent advice. After urging the teachers to tell the children that they were lost and miserable sinners, he added, "You will dwell on the lovely story, how Christ Jesus gave himself an

offering for sin. You will tell the children, in language they can best understand, the need of being acquainted with the Saviour,—how they should love him, and what obligations they are under to obey him." He then referred to the sermon which Mr. Weight had delivered, and remarked, "I cannot give you a finer exhortation to conclude with, than that which my good young brother has addressed you from, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be stedfast," don't be wavering in any part of your duty—"immoveable;" that will prove that you are steadfast indeed, if there is no moving you from it;—"always abounding in the work of the Lord;" we cannot imagine how much we increase in the work of the Lord as we abound in it. Remember, that it is in time alone that you can do good. In heaven there will be nothing to do in bringing sinners to God."

In his last sermon, and when he was on the very threshold of eternity, he exclaimed, "I do believe that, for the first ten thousand years after we enter the kingdom of glory, it will be all surprise; but will this surprise never end? Never, while we behold the person of the Lord."

On the Monday previous to his removal the Rev. Thomas Jackson had an interview with the dying minister. He remarked, "Upon a review of my public life, and in the near prospect of eternity,—if my time were to come over again, I would pursue exactly the same course which I have done." He spoke of himself in terms of the greatest humility, and mentioned his wish as to the place of his burial. "If it had pleased God to have taken me to himself while I was at Wotton, I should have liked to have been buried with Mrs. Hill; but, as my heavenly Father has otherwise determined, I would rather be buried in Surrey Chapel, where I have preached for half a century, than have my body carried so many miles after my death."

During this conversation, Mr. Jackson said, "Well, Sir, it is probable we shall soon lose you; but our loss will be your gain. You are going to be with Jesus, and to see him as he is." —Mr. Hill replied with great emphasis, "Yes, and I shall be *like* him; that is the crowning point."

It now became evident that he was fast approaching the world of spirits: his mind was calm, and he seemed to be breathing after holi-

ness. He quoted several appropriate hymns and texts of Scripture. On the day before his death, when he had been lying, apparently dozing, for some time, he turned himself in his bed, and in a manner peculiarly his own, said, "The greatest curse that ever entered the church of God is dirty antinomianism."

The Rev. George Clayton was with Mr. Hill not long before his departure to the heavenly rest. The dying saint said to him, "I have no rapturous joys, but peace—a good hope, through grace—all through grace."

"On the Wednesday before his death," remarks Mr. Weight, "I enjoyed much conversation with him. He told me, if he could live over his life again, he would preach the very same truths as those he had been accustomed to deliver. 'I have to deplore nothing but that I have not preached them with more of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.' I asked him if he felt his personal interest in Christ? 'I can see more of the Saviour's glory than of my interest in him. God is letting me down gently into the grave, and I shall *creep* into heaven through some crevice of the door.'

"In the evening, his mind occasionally wandered. He called up his servant, and desired

him to read to him. He read 5th chap. of 2 Cor. Mr. Hill commented on the 4th and 17th verses. About ten that night he sent for me to conduct family prayer by his bedside, refusing to rest until I had done so. On Thursday, the collection of phlegm in his chest prevented his speaking very audibly; but I could hear him softly repeating verses of Scripture and hymns, particularly, 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him;' and 'Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God.'

"About ten o'clock that morning, I repeated to him a verse that had often been on his lips,

'And when I'm to die,' &c.

He shewed me that he understood what I was saying, but he could not articulate. And this was the last evidence of sensibility he gave. At half-past five the same day (11th April), without a sigh, groan, or struggle, he gently expired."

"How bless'd the righteous when he dies,
When sinks a weary soul to rest;
How mildly beam the closing eyes,
How gently heaves th' expiring breast!

"So fades a summer cloud away,
So sinks the gale when storms are o'er,
So gently shuts the eye of day,
So dies a wave along the shore."

"MARK THE PERFECT MAN, AND BEHOLD THE UPRIGHT: FOR THE END OF THAT MAN IS PEACE."

The announcement of Mr. Hill's death produced a painful impression on the minds of his people, for they felt that a father and a friend had been removed from them. He had baptized many of them in their infancy, and others had been led to the saving knowledge of God through his instrumentality. They were allowed to see the body of their devoted minister, before it was removed to its last resting place. He was lovely in death The countenance seemed to be an index of the state of the soul at the moment death was swallowed up in victory. The lines of extreme old age had been removed by the gentle swelling of the face, and you could almost imagine that the process of the resurrection morning had commenced.

On Friday, the 19th April, 1833, the remains of the venerable man were conveyed to the

silent tomb which had been prepared for their reception, directly under the pulpit where he had for fifty years faithfully preached the Gospel. A considerable assemblage of ministers met in the chapel-house before the funeral, when the aged Dr. Rippon was requested to pray for the sanctification of the event to all connected with the departed minister. The body was then conducted from the house into the chapel, preceded by the Rev. Dr. Collyer and the Rev. Thomas Jackson. The noble nephew of the deceased, the commander-in-chief of the British forces, accompanied by his aide-de-camp Captain George Hill, attended as chief mourner. The pall was sustained by clergymen and ministers of various denominations. The trustees of the chapel, the executors, the private friends of the deceased, the ministers who had long supplied the pulpit, the deputations from several religious societies, and the servants of the family, then followed. On entering the chapel, the effect of the scene was overwhelming. The place was crowded by persons in decent mourning. The poor sisters from the alms-houses appeared in the new attire which their departed friend had provided for them. The children of the School of Industry were

seen in their neat emblems of sorrow. The pulpit, the desks, and the whole of the front gallery, were covered with black cloth. The body was placed before the pulpit. All the necessary preparations having been quietly made, the funeral service was read by Dr. Collyer and Mr. Jackson. At the time the body was lowered into its resting-place, the officiating minister read the sentence, "We commit the body of our *father* to the grave, in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life." The substitution of the word father for brother produced a solemn effect. The instantaneous expression of feeling appeared like the passing of the electric fluid; all were touched at the same moment.*

* "At the funeral of the Rev. John Wesley, the late Mr. Richardson, who now lies with him in the same vault, read the funeral service in a manner that made it peculiarly affecting. When he came to that part of it, "Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God to take unto himself the soul of our dear *brother*," &c. he substituted with the most tender emphasis, the epithet *father* instead of *brother*, which had so powerful an effect on the congregation, that from silent tears they seemed universally to burst out into loud weeping."—Watson's Life of Wesley, page 341.

During the funeral service, Luther's Hymn was sung; the trumpet-stop on the organ giving a fine effect to the music. At the close of that service the Rev. Thomas Russell gave out one of Mr. Hill's favourite hymns.

> Jesus, thy blood and righteousness
> My beauty are, my glorious dress;
> Midst flaming worlds in these arrayed,
> With joy shall I lift up my head.

The Rev. George Clayton then offered up a suitable prayer. The funeral sermon was preached by the Rev. William Jay, of Bath, who for nearly fifty years had been one of the most acceptable preachers in the chapel, and a man greatly beloved by the departed minister. His appearance reminded the congregation that the supplies as well as the pastor were hastening to their home. When Mr. Jay preached his first sermon "he was but a youth," now "grey hairs were upon him." His text was selected from Zech. xi. 2. "Howl, fir tree, for the cedar is fallen." He gave a faithful sketch of the character of his departed friend, with the pencil of a master. The concluding prayer was offered up by the Rev. George Collison, of Hackney.

It was an interesting spectacle to witness the

grave of Rowland Hill, at the close of the funeral solemnities. There stood one of the heroes of Waterloo, with the star of his order glittering on his breast, looking at the last earthly home of a most endeared relative, whose prayers had often ascended to God on his behalf. There also was the aged clerk of the chapel, who for fifty years had been connected with its religious services. His head was supported upon his knee, the foot resting upon a hassock. His eye seemed immovably fixed on the tomb, and his tears witnessed how much he respected the departed. There the ministers of the Gospel beheld the earthly house of their venerable father, and silently exclaimed, "May we also be faithful unto death, and may our last end be like his." The widow, the orphan, the Sabbath-school teacher, the visitors of the poor and afflicted, and the aged tenants of the alms-houses raised by the deceased, all surrounded the grave. Earthly distinctions were forgotten, and amidst the sorrows of the scene, all rejoiced that the pastor was

"Not lost, but gone before."

On the front of the organ gallery, a neat marble tablet, with a bust of the deceased, has been erected, bearing the following inscription:

To the Memory of the late
REVEREND ROWLAND HILL, A.M.
formerly of
St. John's College, Cambridge,
and for
Half a Century the zealous, active, and devoted
Minister of Surrey Chapel,
This Tablet is erected, rather in token
of
the grateful Recollections of
A revered Pastor,
by his bereaved and mourning Congregation.
than as a Tribute
suitable to the Worth of One,
the
Imperishable Monuments of whose Labours
are the
Names written in Heaven of the multitudes led to God
by his long and faithful Ministry.
His Mortal Remains
were interred in this Chapel on the
Nineteenth Day of April,
A.D. MDCCCXXXIII.
Born 23d August, 1744. Died 11th April, 1833.

It would have been a valuable addition to this beautiful monumental incription, had it noticed the itinerant labours of Mr. Hill. On the tombstone of Berridge he is described, as "an itinerant servant of Jesus Christ." Whitefield's monument refers to his "long, laborious travels" in

the Saviour's cause; and Wesley's tablet has the record, "He was the chief promoter and patron of the plan of itinerant preaching. He was sixty-five years in the ministry, and fifty-two an itinerant preacher."

The writer closes this chapter in the words of Dr. Bates, in his funeral sermon for the Rev. Richard Baxter, which are peculiarly appropriate to Rowland Hill:—

"Thus lived and died that blessed saint. I have, without any artificial fiction of words, given a sincere account of him. All our tears are below the just grief for such an invaluable loss. It is the comfort of his friends that he enjoys a blessed reward in heaven, and has left a precious remembrance on the earth. Now, blessed be the gracious God, that he was pleased to prolong the life of his servant, so useful and beneficial to the world, to a full age; that he has brought him slowly and safely to heaven. I shall conclude this account with my own deliberate wish: May I live the short remainder of my life as entirely to the glory of God as he lived; and when I shall come to the period of my life, may I die in the same blessed peace wherein he died. May I be with him in the kingdom of light and love for ever. Amen."

CHAP. XVII.

THE TIMES OF ROWLAND HILL—GENERAL REVIEW OF HIS DEVOTED ATTACHMENT TO CHRISTIAN UNION, AND THE CAUSE OF CHRIST UNIVERSALLY.

MR. HILL A SPECIAL INSTRUMENT FOR HIS OWN TIMES—REV. MR. SIMEON—EMINENT PERSONS CONNECTED WITH THE REVIVAL OF RELIGION—MR. HILL A LEADER—THE DIFFERENT OPINIONS OF HIS BIOGRAPHERS ON HIS MINISTERIAL COURSE—HIS OWN OPINION ON THE SAME SUBJECT—THE SAVIOUR'S PRAYER—EXTRACTS FROM DR. PYE SMITH'S SERMON ON UNION AMONG CHRISTIANS—PHILIP HENRY ON THE SAME SUBJECT—GROUND AND EXTENT OF CHRISTIAN UNION—EXTRACT FROM "FUNDAMENTAL REFORM"—RESULTS OF LIBERAL INSTITUTIONS—EFFORTS STILL NECESSARY FOR THE CONVERSION OF THE WORLD—BY WHOM TO BE MADE—BISHOP OF LONDON'S CHARGE—CONCLUSION—LIST OF MR. HILL'S WORKS.

No one, it is presumed, can have read the details which have now been given, without feeling that the beloved man, whose history has been recorded, was specially raised up by God for a great and holy work. The times in which he appeared were peculiar, and required an extra-

ordinary effort, to rouse Christian professors from their awful lethargy. This period has been briefly sketched in a former part of this work; and it is only necessary to remind the reader, that when Mr. Hill began his academical course, holy men were expelled from Oxford for praying, and expounding the Scriptures, and at Cambridge the poor shoeblack,* at St. John's, was the only person in the university who ventured to give Mr. Hill a friendly smile. Long subsequent to this event, opposition to vital godliness was continued, and the late venerable Mr. Simeon, who had suffered much persecution, is said to have shed tears, when he received, in the street, the first mark of respect from a pious undergraduate.

It required no ordinary determination to break through the restrictions which prevailed in the established church when Mr. Hill became a preacher of righteousness. Bold, fearless, enterprising men were needed; men who were able to "count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord." Such men, it has been seen, were raised up in the church,—Wesley, Whitefield, Berridge, Fletcher, Hervey, and Toplady, pre-

* See Sidney's Life, p. 158.

pared the way for Pentycross, Simpson, Robinson, Venn, Cadogan, Newton, the good Dean of Carlisle, and many others, to proclaim, with liberty, the only way of salvation. Among the ranks of the nonconformists, appeared many holy men, whose works still praise them: Watts and Doddridge had disappeared from the scene; but the venerable Mr. Bull, the holy Cornelius Winter, the eccentric Ryland, with a band of pious laymen, boldly preached the unsearchable riches of Christ; and in their train followed Wilks, Bogue, Andrew Fuller, Burder, and many others who "have now fallen asleep." Even the "elect ladies" of the church were not inactive. They were deeply grieved "that many deceivers had entered into the world." Hence, Lady Glenorchy, the excellent Countess of Huntingdon, Lady Ann Erskine, and others, devoted themselves to promote the cause of Christ, and their labours were not in vain in the Lord.

These united efforts disturbed those who were at ease in Zion. The narrow boundaries of party were broken down, and men, constrained by the love of Christ, confined not themselves within the geographical limits presented to them by human systems. They heard the great

Head of the church say to them, "Preach the Gospel to *every* creature;" and wherever they were able, they plucked brands from the everlasting burnings. It is certainly one beautiful feature of Christianity, that it is adapted to universality, unless encumbered and impeded by machinery of human invention. And that system must be the most primitive and scriptural, which encourages men to go every where preaching "repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."

Mr. Hill having been raised up at a particular period of the history of the church, must not be measured by any party standard. The dress of no particular regiment in the great army of the Living God will suit him. He was one of the irregulars, in the recruiting party, sent to enlist wandering prodigals, and to bring them under the standard of Immanuel. He was born to be a leader, but not to be led. His ambition was not to raise a party, and to call it after his own name, but to serve all parties to the full extent of his power. He was never intended to be confined within the pale of any church. He was "a comet, and therefore his path was eccentric and unconfined."*

* Sidney's Life, p. 91.

In examining his character, we must look at him as *sui generis*. It is, therefore, to be regretted that his biographer should think it right to admonish his reader that the example of his beloved friend was not always to be imitated;* and to indulge in speculative musings, as to what might have been the happy consequences, if Mr. Hill had returned into the bosom of the church whence he wandered.† Had he done so, he might have found, with Jonah, that the storm of God's providence would have driven him back to the discharge of his special duty. This Columbus was not to be chained to the oar; and such would have been the case, had he been confined within the limits of parochial labours.

One of his biographers thinks he wandered too far,‡—the other§ that he did not wander far enough, "and that by labouring to uphold a system against which the vials of the wrath of heaven are pouring out," he was "all his life time trammelled with antichristian abominations!" Without attempting to reconcile the opposite views of the biographers of our de-

* Sidney's Life, p. 413.
† Ibid. p. 413.
‡ Ibid. p. 413.
§ Jones's Life, p. 314.

parted friend, let him speak for himself on this point.—"I observed with regret, that good men, fettered by the trammels of education, or by the laws of their different churches, by no means exerted themselves as the sacred cause most assuredly demanded. As matters thus opened to my view, I was the less embarrassed, and the path of duty appeared much more plain before me. My prayer was answered, 'Teach me the way in which I should go, for I lift up my soul unto thee.' I trust I heard the voice of a gracious Providence distinctly say, This is the way, walk ye in it.' In preaching through England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, I always conceived *I stuck close to my parish.*' 'I am now *an old stager* in the itinerant work, and I bless God for the line in which I have been called; being assured that I have followed the will of God therein, as I am satisfied the salvation of many souls has been promoted thereby."*

Throughout the whole of his ministry, Mr. Hill considered it perfectly right to sacrifice points of non-essential importance, when necessary to promote the Saviour's cause; and should some persons consider that he was wrong in adopting

* First Journal of Tour in Scotland, p. 67.

such a plan, still the whole tenor of his life will shew that he was sincere in the course he pursued. As long as every denomination holds all its peculiar views upon minor points to be so absolutely important, that strict adherence to them must be a qualification for Christian fellowship, there is too much of the church of Rome left, to authorize an expectation of a general union among "the members of the household of faith."

Before the catholic principles of Mr. Hill are condemned, let Christians consider the solemn prayer of the Redeemer for his people, "that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us,—that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." Can any one denomination venture to deny that saints are to be found in every communion of Christians; and if so, are they not acting directly in opposition to the prayer of the Saviour, in refusing all spiritual intercourse with them? Dr. Pye Smith, in his Sermon "On the Temper to be cultivated by Christians of different denominations towards each other," remarks,* "It is impossible to doubt that many persons, in all ages of Chris-

* Page 9.

tianity, who have held sentiments upon a large variety of religious topics, and those such as we must admit to have been of great, though not of the greatest importance, very different from those of each other, have been equally upright, devotional, humble, and universally holy men. Take, for instance, a few names that will readily occur, but which might be increased to almost any extent: in the church of Rome, Du Verger, the Arnauds, Pascal, and other Jansenists, with Fenelon, who was not a Jansenist; among the Lutherans, Arndt, Spener, Bogatzky, and Bengel; in the Episcopal church of our own country, Usher, Hall, Beveridge; and of the Scots' Episcopalians, Leighton, Scougal, and Forbes, of Corse; of Presbyterians, Rivet, Witsius, Rutherford, Halyburton, and more than one Erskine; of Congregationalists, Owen, Watts, Edwards, and Williams; of those who disapprove Infant Baptism, Booth, Sutcliffe, Fuller, and Ryland; and I might go on to add names ever dear to the Christian, from the Society of Friends, and our brethren, the different classes of Methodists. Have not those men drawn opposite conclusions upon many subjects,—in relation to which each thought and felt strongly,—however, not regarding them

as first-rate articles of revealed truth? Upon those contrary doctrines, and contradictory declarations, it is impossible that the views of all those persons should have been agreeable to the truth; some must have been in error; yet, who will venture to charge any of them with being, more than the others, or more than is the common lot of human nature, defective in learning, attention, diligence, impartiality, or, above all, sincere, vital, powerful piety."

The holy and excellent Philip Henry breathed similar sentiments on this point. When preaching on John xvii. 21, he remarked, "Notwithstanding the many sad divisions that are in the church, yet all the saints, as far as they are sanctified, are *one:* one in relation, one flock, one family, one building, one body, one head; one by representation, one in image and likeness; of one inclination and disposition; one in their aims, one in their askings, one in amity and friendship, one in interest, and one in their inheritance; nay, they are one in judgment and opinion; though in some things they differ, yet those things in which they are agreed are many more, and much more considerable, than those in which they differ. They are of a mind concerning sin, that it is the worst thing in the world;

concerning Christ, that he is all in all; concerning the favour of God, that it is better than life; concerning the world, that it is vanity; concerning the word of God, that it is very precious."*

The question, however, may be asked, on what ground can a general communion of saints be established? We answer the inquiry in the language of Dr. Pye Smith:† "The atoning sacrifice of Christ, and the renewing influence of the Holy Spirit, are the *essentials* of Christianity, and they are presented to the church in 1 Cor. vii. 19, in opposition to a zealous contention about forms and ceremonies, and a bigoted adherence either to the rejection or the retention of them. Neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumsion. Let us not quarrel about modes and forms, but let this generous rule be the uniting principle of our hearts."‡

* See an excellent Tract on "The Unity of the Church," by the Hon. and Rev. B. W. Noel, M.A.

† Sermon, p. 18.

‡ "As for particular churches, they are bound to allow communion to all those who profess the same faith upon which the apostles did give communion. For whatsoever preserves us as members of the church, gives us title to the communion of saints; and what-

To what extent Christian union may be carried without the violation of principle is the next point of consideration. The answer shall again be given in the words of Dr. Smith.* "It is one of the peculiar duties of all true Christians, especially at the present time, for the honour of God and their own benefit, to do

soever faith or belief that is to which God hath promised heaven, that faith makes them members of the Catholic Church. Since, therefore, the judicial acts of the church are then most prudent and religious when they nearest imitate the example and piety of God; to make the way to heaven straiter than God made it, or to deny to communicate with those with whom God will vouchsafe to be united, and to refuse our charity to those who have the same faith, because they have not all our opinions, and believe not every thing necessary which we overvalue, is impious and schismatical; it infers tyranny on one part, and persuades and tempts to uncharitableness and animosities on both; it dissolves societies, and is an enemy to peace: it busies men in impertinent wranglings; and by names of men and titles of factions, it consigns the interested parties to act their differences to the height, and makes them neglect those advantages which piety and a good life bring to the reputation of the Christian religion."—Dr. Jeremy Taylor's Discourse on the Liberty of Prophesying.

* Sermon, p. 33.

their utmost to procure the establishment of three points of practice—the union of ministers of all evangelical denominations in public meetings for prayer; their free interchange of voluntary pulpit services; and their sitting down together at the Lord's table, in the celebration of that which is pre-eminently the ordinance of *Christian communion*, the communion of all who 'glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and who look for his mercy unto eternal life.' Were we but favoured to see a prevailing union in these three principal constituents of Christian fellowship, it would conduce, I cannot but think, beyond all past example, to the purest happiness of individual believers, and to the abundant prosperity of the universal church."*

* "Let not other denominations see that we now cherish an irreligious sectarianism in ourselves, more exclusive and more proud than that which we condemn in them." If the mode in which Dissenters celebrate the Lord's supper contains nothing which seems to be opposed to the will of God, we ought to unite with them in their chapels; and if they do not think that our mode is opposed to the will of God, they are sectarian when they refuse to unite with us. On all occasions we ought to recognize each other as brethren, and especially in this, the most solemn act,

This threefold union was frequently witnessed at Surrey Chapel whilst under the pastoral care of the venerable Rowland Hill, and all good men should pray that his catholic principles may universally prevail.

In a former chapter it has been shown that the history of Mr. Hill was connected with the rise and progress of several of those noble institu-

in which we profess to be the disciples of our common Saviour.

"We should admit Dissenters to our pulpits. That this has not long since been done, is a disgrace to our church. Why must the Scotch Presbyterians alone have the benefit of the instructions of Dr. Chalmers in London, when every pulpit in the Establishment ought to welcome him? Why must Dr. Cooke betake himself to Surrey Chapel? Why must the Dissenters alone listen to Dr. Wardlaw or Mr. Jay? The pretence that bad doctrine might thus be taught from the pulpits of the Establishment, is idle in the extreme. If a clergyman wish for bad doctrine, what is to hinder his finding it in the Establishment? He need not go out of it, for any form of extravagance, or dulness, or error. And, if he does not wish for it, he would not admit an unsound Congregationalist any more than he would an unsound Episcopalian now, to preach for him." See Fundamental Reform of the Church Establishment, pages 43 & 44. By a Clergyman.

tions which were established on the catholic principles he so evidently loved. These liberal institutions had worked great and important changes before the removal of Mr. Hill to his eternal rest. The darkness which covered the earth, and the gross darkness the people, began to withdraw before the rising of the Sun of righteousness. In India numerous churches had been planted, and the Scriptures printed in many languages and dialects. China had been furnished with unadulterated truth in her own tongue. Ethiopia was stretching out her hands unto God, and her enslaved sons in our western colonies were on the eve of emancipation. Several of the beautiful islands of the Pacific had been delivered from savage and inhuman rites, to serve the living and true God;

"Mr. Hill used freely to admit, that, as a useful and commanding post, the church had no equal; but he considered that even this might be rendered more efficient without any violation of principle, and particularly by giving power to the clergy to admit as visitors ministers of certain other orthodox Protestant denominations. Some such concessions, wisely regulated and judiciously used, would perhaps tend rather to increase than diminish the stability of our position." Sidney's Life of Hill, p. 398.

and Europe, though still in great darkness, had partly shaken off the chains of the Roman pontiff.

Great as these changes have been, there remains much to be done before the Gospel will be spread through the world. There are many official as well as moral difficulties to be removed out of the way. No spiritual power must prevent the Gospel from being freely and fully preached in every heathen land. Souls must be loved better than the discipline and rules of any church, and our highly esteemed colonial prelates must allow their ministers and missionaries "a little elbow-room." Let men who "contend earnestly for the faith," who are "wise to win souls," and who "travail in birth again until Christ shall be formed in them," be encouraged to "go forward," and let them not be stopped at every advanced step by the spiritual police, to ascertain whether they are moving strictly within the limits which human regulations have prescribed.

The conversion of the world will not be committed to any one section of the Christian church. All the saints will share in this blessed work, and the truths in which they agree, and not their sectarian differences, will be the

means of its accomplishment.* It is encouraging to find that this principle is now attracting public attention. The Bishop of London, in a recent charge, remarks, "The Wesleyan Methodists, I fear, cannot be considered, at the present day, as being directly or intentionally subsidiary to the church; but I know not why we should hesitate to acknowledge the good which they have done to the cause which the church has in hand, by their zealous and laborious exertions, as teachers of Gospel truth, in many parts of the kingdom where the church afforded no sufficient provision for the spiritual wants of a rapidly accumulated population. It was necessary that Christ should be preached there; and if WE did not possess the means of doing so within ourselves, we have reason to rejoice that it was faithfully though *irregularly* done by others."

These remarks, if applicable to our own country, are equally so to the world at large. Let us rejoice, then, to whatever denomination we may belong, in the growing prosperity of

* Would not this be a valuable subject for a prize essay?—namely, "The truths in which real Christians are agreed, and not their sectarian differences, will lead to the evangelization of the world."

every Missionary cause. Although "they follow not with us," yet we will bid them God speed. For, in such labours, "he that is not against us, is for us." Let us "love our common work better than our fellow and confederated labourers, and rejoice that devils are cast out, whosoever may be the instrument; the blessedness of the achievement may well dispose us to overlook some little irregularity in the means."*

The writer has completed his memorial of a revered pastor. It has been his wish not to give utterance to a single expression, which he thought would be objectionable to his departed friend. He has had no ambition to advance the views of any particular party, but has been most anxious to increase the spirit of union among all true Christians. Now that the successor of the immortal Whitefield has finished his course, let us hope that suitably qualified ministers will be raised up, to carry on the work of the Lord. Let such spiritual Samsons advance in the holy conflict, prepared to snap asunder the bands of every party which may interfere with the most enlarged efforts for the conversion of perishing men.

* Dissent not Schism, p. 66.

The evangelization of the world, however, will not be realized by human effort alone: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." It is the solemn duty of Christians to plead earnestly with God for the general effusion of Divine influence, "and to give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." The members of Christ's holy church must be seen more at the throne of grace, than heard amidst the contentions of party strife. Sectarian meetings must be exchanged for meetings of prayer. And why should not this be the case? Is it impossible in these times, to imitate the example of the primitive saints, "who when the day of Pentecost was fully come, were all with one accord in *one* place?" And would not similar and more glorious results follow? Prayer led to the revival of religion in the days of Romaine, and bound together the little remnant of the saints as the heart of one man. Let the same means now be tried, and in proportion as the Spirit of grace and of supplications rests upon "the household of faith," will there be real unity in "the holy catholic church." The breath of prayer would raise "the curtains of our distinct habitations," and "the place of

our tents be sufficiently enlarged" to contain "the one fold," of the Saviour's flock. The combined efforts of true Christians "would lengthen the cords and strengthen the stakes of the church,"—and the world be speedily brought into happy subjection to "the Prince of peace."

"COME THEN, AND, ADDED TO THY MANY CROWNS,
RECEIVE YET ONE, THE CROWN OF ALL THE EARTH,
THOU WHO ALONE ART WORTHY."—AMEN.

List of the Rev. Rowland Hill's Works, which are referred to in the previous Memoir.

1. The Gospel Message; being the substance of a Sermon delivered in the parish church of Kingston, near Taunton, June 20, 1773.

2. A Token of respect to the Memory of the late Rev. James Rouquet; being the substance of a Sermon preached at the parish church of St. Werburgh, in the city of Bristol, on Sunday, November 24, 1776.

3. A full Answer to the Rev. John Wesley's Remarks upon a late pamphlet published in Defence of the character of the Rev. Mr. Whitefield and others. October, 1777.

4. Christ Crucified the Sum and Substance of the Scriptures; a Sermon preached on Whitsunday, June 8, 1783, on the Opening of Surrey Chapel, St. George's Road. 1783.

5. Glorious Displays of Gospel Grace; a Sermon preached at Surrey Chapel on the formation of the London Missionary Society, on the 24th May. 1794.

6. An Expostulatory Letter to the Rev. W. D. Tattersall, A.M., Rector of Westbourne, Sussex, and Vicar of Wotton-under-edge, Gloucestershire; in which the bad tendency of the admission of Stage Amusements, in a religious and moral point of view, is seriously considered. 1795.

7. First Journal of a Tour into the North, with Remarks on the Present State of Religion in Scotland, on some party distinctions in England, and on Lay and Itinerant Preaching. 1798.

8. An Answer to Dr. Jamieson's Remarks on the late Tour of the Rev. Rowland Hill. 1798.

9. A series of Letters occasioned by the late Pastoral Admonition of the Church of Scotland. 1798.

10. Divine Hymns for Children; designed as an Appendix to Dr. Watts's Divine Songs. 1798.

11. Instruction for Children; or, a Token of Love for the Rising Generation. 1798.

12. A Second Tour from London through the Highlands of Scotland, and the North-western parts of England. 1799.

13. A Plea for Union, and for a Free Propagation of the Gospel; being an Answer to Dr. Jamieson's Remarks on the late Tour of the Rev. R. Hill. 1800.

14. The Village Dialogues. 1801. Subsequently enlarged.

15. An Apology for Sunday Schools; the substance of a Sermon preached at Surrey Chapel, Feb. 22, 1801, for the Southwark Sunday Schools, with Incidental Remarks on the late Charge of the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Rochester. 1801.

16. Spiritual Characteristics; represented in an account of a most curious Sale of Curates by Public Auction, who were to be disposed of in consequence of the Clergy Residence Act. By an Old Observer. 1803.

17. The Protection of God our best Confidence in Time of Danger; being the substance of a Sermon preached before the Volunteers at Surrey Chapel. 1803.

18. A Warning to Professors; containing Aphoristic Observations on the Nature and Tendency of Public Amusements. 1806.

19. Cow-pock Inoculation Vindicated and Recommended, from matters of fact. 1806.

20. A Serious Investigation of the Nature and Effects of Parochial Assessments being charged on Places of Religious Worship. 1811.

21. Religious Freedom in Danger; or, the Toleration Act Invaded by Parochial Assessments. 1816.

22. A Catechism for Children; being a Short and Easy Summary of the Christian Dispensation, intended for the Use of Sunday-schools.

23. Four Dialogues in Prison.

24. Thomas Steady and John Wild; a Dialogue about Fairs.

25. A Collection of Hymns for the Use of Surrey Chapel.

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